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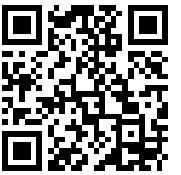

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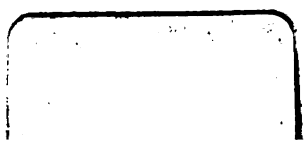

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THE DECISIVE WARS OF HISTORY

A STUDY IN STRATEGY

BY

B. H. LIDDELL HART

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
1929

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To

IVOR MAXSE

TRAINER OF TROOPS FOR VICTORY

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PREFACE

The first chapter of this book is in a general sense the preface, explaining its purpose, scope and theme. These have evolved more gradually and less consecutively than is usual in the preparation of a book, and as the guiding idea has been that of an attempt to distil the essence of one's reading and reflection over a number of years, so the historical narrative is a condensed product of the notes made when studying each of the several wars epitomised. It would have been easier to have woven these notes into a narrative of greater length, but the desire that the "wood" should not be obscured by the "trees" has prompted a severe pruning of unessential facts. If the foliage is too bare for the taste of some readers, I would ask their forgiveness on the score that, for the specialised student, this book is intended as a guide in historical study rather than as a compendium of history.

I would also utilise this "preliminary" preface to acknowledge the kindness of those who have read and criticised the typescript and proofs at various stages. For helpful comments and suggestions my thanks are due, in particular, to my friends Brigadiers J. G. Dill, B. D. Fisher, J. F. C. Fuller, H. Karslake, Colonel The Viscount Gort, Mr. E. G. Hawke, and T. E. S.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AS PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

"FOOLS say that they learn by experience. I prefer to profit by others' experience." This famous saying, quoted of Bismarck but by no means original to him, has a peculiar bearing on military questions. For it has often been remarked that the soldier, unlike the followers of other professions, has but rare opportunities to practise his profession. Indeed it might even be argued that in a literal sense the profession of arms is not a profession at all but merely "casual employment." And, paradoxically, that it ceased to be a profession when the soldier of fortune gave way to the "professional soldier"—when mercenary troops who were employed and paid for the purpose of a war were replaced by standing armies which continued to be paid when there was no war.

This logical, if somewhat extreme argument, recalls the excuse often made in the past for paying officers a rate inadequate to live on, and by some of those officers for doing an inadequate day's work—the contention being that the officer's pay was not a working salary but a "retainer," paid to him for the benefit of having his services available in case of war.

If the argument—that strictly there is no "profession of arms"—will not hold good in most armies to-day on

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the score of work, it is inevitably strengthened on the score of practice by the increasing infrequency of wars. Are we then left with the conclusion that armies are doomed to become more and more "amateurish"—in the popular bad sense of that much abused and misused word? For, obviously, even the best of peace training is more "theoretical" than "practical" experience.

But Bismarck's aphorism throws a different and more encouraging light on the problem. It helps us to realise that there are two forms of practical experience, direct and indirect. And that of the two, indirect practical experience may be the more valuable, because infinitely wider. Even in the most active career, especially a soldier's career, the scope and possibilities of direct experience are extremely limited. In contrast to the military the medical profession has incessant practice, yet the great achievements have usually been due to the research worker and not to the general practitioner.

Direct experience is inherently too limited to form a secure foundation for either theory or application. At the best it produces an atmosphere, which is of value in drying and hardening the structure of our thought. The greater value of indirect experience lies in its greater variety and extent. "History is universal experience"—the experience not of another, but of many others under manifold conditions.

Here we have the rational justification for military history—its preponderant practical value in the training and mental development of a soldier. But the benefit depends, as with all experience, on its breadth, on how closely it approaches the definition quoted above, and on the method of studying it.

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PART I

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Soldiers universally concede the general truth of Napoleon's much-quoted dictum that in war " the moral is to the physical as three to one." The actual arithmetical proportion may be worthless, for morale is apt to decline if weapons be inadequate, and the strongest will is of little use if it is inside a dead body. But although the moral and physical factors are inseparable and indivisible, the saying gains its immortal value because it expresses the idea of the predominance of moral factors in all military decisions. On them constantly turns the issue of war and battle. And in the history of war they form the only constant factors, changing only in degree, whereas the physical factors are fundamentally different in almost every war and every situation.

This realisation affects the whole question of the study of military history for practical use. The method in the last few generations has been to select one or two campaigns and to study them exhaustively as a means of developing both our minds and a theory of war. But the continual changes in the means of war, from war to war, entail a grave danger, even a certainty, that our outlook will be narrowed and the lessons fallacious. In the physical sphere the one constant factor is that means and conditions are invariably inconstant.

In contrast, human nature varies but slightly in its reaction to danger. Some men by race, by environment, or by training, may be less sensitive than others, but the difference is one of degree, not of fundamental. The more localised the situation, and our study, the more disconcerting and less calculable is such a difference of degree. It may prevent any exact calculation of the resistance which men will offer in any situation, but it does not

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impair the judgment that they will offer less if taken by surprise than if they are on the alert—less if they are weary and hungry than if they are fresh and well fed. The broader the psychological survey the better foundation it affords for deductions.

The predominance of the psychological over the physical, and its greater constancy, point to the conclusion that the foundation of any theory of war should be as broad as possible. An intensive study of one campaign, unless based on an extensive knowledge of the whole history of war, is as likely to lead us into pitfalls as on to the peaks of military achievement. But if a certain effect is seen to follow a certain cause in a score or more cases, in different epochs and diverse conditions, there is ground for regarding this cause as an integral part of any theory of war.

This book, like the thesis which emerges from it, is the product of such an "extensive" examination. It might, indeed, be termed the compound effect of certain causes—these being connected with my task as military editor of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica." For while I had previously delved into various periods of military history according to my inclination, this task compelled a general survey of all, often against my inclination. And a surveyor, even a tourist, if you will, has at least a better perspective and can at least take in the general lie of the land, where the miner knows only his own seam. During this survey one impression grew ever stronger—that throughout the ages decisive results in war have only been reached when the approach has been indirect. In other words, that in strategy the longest way round is the shortest way there.

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More and more clearly has the fact emerged that a direct approach to one's mental object, or physical objective, along the " line of natural expectation " for the opponent, has ever tended to, and usually produced, negative results. The reason has been expressed graphically in Napoleon's dictum that " the moral is to the physical as three to one." It may be expressed scientifically by saying that while the strength of an enemy country lies outwardly in its numbers and resources, these are fundamentally dependent upon stability " or " equilibrium " of control, morale and supply. The former are but the flesh covering the framework of bones and ligaments.

To move along the line of natural expectation is to consolidate the opponent's equilibrium, and by stiffening it to augment his resisting power. In war as in wrestling the attempt to throw the opponent without loosening his foothold and balance can only result in self-exhaustion, increasing in disproportionate ratio to the effective strain put upon him. Victory by such a method can only be possible through an immense margin of superior strength in some form, and even so tends to lose decisiveness. In contrast, an examination of military history, not of one period but of its whole course, points to the fact that in all the decisive campaigns the dislocation of the enemy's psychological and physical balance has been the vital prelude to a successful attempt at his overthrow. This dislocation has been produced by a strategic indirect approach, intentional or fortuitous. It may take varied forms as our analysis reveals. For the strategy of indirect approach is inclusive of, but wider than, the " manœuvre sur les derrières " which General Camon's profound

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researches established as being the constant aim and key-method of Napoleon in his conduct of operations. Where Camon is concerned primarily with the logistical moves—the factors of time, space and communications—this analysis seeks to probe deeper to the psychological foundations, and, in so doing, finds an underlying relationship between many strategical operations which have no outward resemblance to a " manœuvre sur les derrières," but are none the less definitely vital examples of the " strategy of indirect approach."

To trace this relationship and to determine the character of the operations, it is not necessary, and is indeed irrelevant, to tabulate the numerical strengths and the details of supply and transport. Our concern is simply with the historical effects in a comprehensive series of cases, and with the logistical or psychological moves which led up to them.

If similar effects follow fundamentally similar moves in conditions which vary widely in nature, scale and date, there is clearly an underlying connection from which we can logically deduce a common cause. And the more widely the conditions vary, the firmer is this deduction.

But the objective value of a broad survey of war is not limited to the research for new and true doctrine. If a broad survey is an essential foundation for any theory of war, it is equally necessary for the ordinary military student who seeks to develop his own outlook and judgment. Otherwise his knowledge of war will be like an inverted pyramid balanced precariously on a slender apex. At a university the student only comes to post-graduate research after he has had a general grounding in history as a schoolboy, and then, as an undergraduate, has

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developed this background by the study of the constitutional and economic aspects, and of special periods. Yet the military student, who commonly comes late to his subject, when the mind is less supple than in adolescence, is expected to begin at a point corresponding with post-graduate research. This paradoxical situation, and sometimes the result, is irresistibly suggestive of those immortal lines in " Alice in Wonderland " :

" You are old, father William," the young man said,
" And your hair has become very white;
And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
Do you think, at your age, it is right ? "

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CHAPTER II

GREEK WARS—EPAMINONDAS, PHILIP AND ALEXANDER

THE most natural starting-point for a survey is the first "Great War" in European history—the Great Persian War. We cannot expect much guidance from a period when strategy was in infancy, but the name of Marathon is too deeply stamped on the mind and imagination of all readers of history to be disregarded. It was still more impressed on the imagination of the Greeks, and hence its importance came to be exaggerated by them and, through them, by Europeans in all subsequent ages. Yet by the reduction of its importance to juster proportions, its strategical significance is increased. The Persian invasion of 490 B.C. was a comparatively small expedition intended to teach Eretria and Athens, petty states in the eyes of Darius and in reality, to mind their own business and abstain from encouraging revolt among Persia's Greek subjects in Asia Minor.

Eretria was satisfactorily destroyed and its inhabitants deported for resettlement on the Persian Gulf. Next came the turn of Athens, where the ultra-democratic party was known to be waiting to aid the Persian intervention against their own conservative party. The Persians, instead of making a direct advance on Athens, landed at Marathon, 24 miles north-east of it. Thereby they could calculate on drawing the Athenian army towards them and so facilitate the seizure of power in

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Athens by their adherents, whereas a direct attack on the city would have hampered such a rising, perhaps even have rallied its force against them, and in any case have given them the extra difficulty of a siege.

The bait succeeded, and the Athenian army marched out to Marathon against the main mass of the enemy's armed forces, most literally fulfilling modern military doctrine. Unluckily for the Persians, a change of feeling had occurred among their democratic adherents in Athens, but even so they proceeded to execute the next step in their strategical plan. Under the protection of a covering force they re-embarked the rest of the army in order to move it round to Phalerum, land there and make a spring at unguarded Athens.

Thanks to the energy of Miltiades the Athenians took their one chance by striking without delay at the covering force. And in the battle, the superior armour and armament of the Greeks, always their supreme assets against the Persians, combined with their novel tactics to give them the victory—although the fight was harder than patriotic legend suggested, and most of the covering force got safely away on the ships. With still more creditable energy the Athenians counter-marched rapidly back to their city, and this rapidity combined with the belatedness of the disaffected party to save them. For the Persians were kept waiting too long for the expected shield signal, and once the Athenian army was back in Athens and once they saw a siege was inevitable, they sailed back to Asia, as their merely punitive object was not worth purchasing at a heavy price.

Ten years passed before the Persians attempted a real effort to repeat and reinforce the intended lesson. But the

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Greeks were slow to profit by the warning, and it was not until 487 B.C. that Athens began the expansion of her fleet which was to be decisive next time. Thus it can with truth be said that Greece and Europe were saved by a revolt in Egypt, which kept Persia's attention occupied from 486 to 484, as well as by the death of Darius, uniquely able among the Persian rulers.

When the menace developed, in 481, this time on a grand scale, its very magnitude not only consolidated the Greek factions and states against it, but compelled Xerxes to make a direct approach to his goal. For the army was too big to be transported by sea and hence was compelled to take an overland route. And it was too big to supply itself, and so the fleet had to be used for this purpose. The army was tied to the coast and the navy tied to the army—each tied by the leg. Thus the Greeks were able to be sure as to the line along which to expect the enemy's approach, and the Persians were unable to depart from it. The nature of the country afforded the Greeks a series of points at which they could firmly block the line of natural expectation and, as Grundy has said, but for their own dissensions of interest and counsel "it is probable that the invaders would never have got south of Thermopylae." As it was, history gained an immortal story and it was left to the Greek fleet to dislocate the invasion irredeemably by defeating the Persian fleet at Salamis—while Xerxes and the Persian army watched helplessly the destruction of what was not merely their fleet but, far more vitally, their source of supply. It is worth remark that the opportunity for this decisive naval battle was obtained by another form of indirect approach—Themistocles's message to Xerxes that the Greek fleet was ripe for treacherous

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surrender. The deception which drew the Persian fleet in to the narrow straits where their superiority of numbers was discounted, gained " virtue " from past experience endowing the message with plausibility. Moreover, in the seventy years which followed, it was the power of indirect approach, to the Persians' own communications, that Athens could and did wield, which restrained the Persians from further intervention in Greece—a deduction well attested by the prompt revival of this interference after the destruction of the Athenian fleet at Syracuse. Historically, it is worth note that the use of strategic mobility for an indirect approach was realised and exploited much earlier in sea than in land warfare. The natural reason is that only in a late stage of development did armies come to depend upon " lines of communication " for their supply. Fleets, however, were used to operate against the sea-borne communications, or means of supply, of a hostile country, and once this conception was established it was natural to apply it as a means to a naval end—a " military " end at sea.

With the passing of the Persian menace, the sequel to Salamis was the rise of Athens to the ascendancy in Greek affairs. This ascendancy was ended by the Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.). But the extravagant duration of these twenty-seven years of warfare, and their terrible drain not only on the chief adversaries but on the luckless would-be neutrals, may be traced to the fluctuating and often purposeless strategy into which both sides repeatedly drifted.

In the first phase Sparta and her allies attempted a direct invasion of Attica. But they were foiled by Pericles's war policy of refusing battle on land while

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using the superior Athenian army to wear down the enemy's will by "devastating" raids. The term "war policy" is used of intent, although the phrase "Periclean strategy" is almost as familiar as that of "Fabian strategy" in a later age. For clear-cut nomenclature is essential to clear thought, and the term "strategy" is best confined to its literal meaning of "generalship"—the actual direction of military force as distinct from the policy governing its employment and combining it with other weapons—economic, political, psychological. For this policy the term "grand strategy" has been coined, but apt as it is its meaning is not so easily grasped. Hence, although I prefer "grand strategy" and have constantly used it elsewhere, I shall here normally use the term "war policy," because analysis and classification are the dominant purposes of this examination of history. Instead of a strategy of indirect approach seeking to dislocate the enemy's balance in order to produce a decision, the Periclean plan was simply a war policy aiming slowly to drain the enemy's endurance in order to convince him that he could not gain a decision. And, unluckily, an importation of plague tipped the scales against Athens in this moral and economic attrition campaign. Hence in 426 B.C. the Periclean strategy was made to give place to the direct offensive strategy of Cleon and Demosthenes. This cost more and succeeded no better, despite some brilliant tactical successes. And in the early winter of 424 B.C. Brasidas, Sparta's ablest soldier, wiped out all the advantage that Athens had painfully won by a strategic move directed against the root, instead of the trunk of the enemy power. Passing by Athens herself, which he ignored, he marched swiftly

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north through the length of Greece and struck at the Athenian dominion in Chalcidice, which has been aptly termed the "Achilles' heel of the Athenian empire." By a combination of military force with the promise of freedom and protection to all cities which revolted against her, he so shook the hold of Athens there that he drew off thither her main forces. At Amphipolis they suffered disaster, and Cleon, death, but Brasidas himself fell in the moment of victory. Even so, Athens was glad to conclude a negative peace with Sparta—less resolute than her great leader.

In the years of pseudo-peace which followed, repeated Athenian expeditions failed to regain the lost footing in Chalcidice. Then as an offensive last hope Athens resorted to an expedition against Syracuse, the key to Sicily, whence came the overseas food supply of Sparta and the Peloponnese generally. As a war policy of indirect approach it had the defect of striking, not at the enemy's actual partners, but rather at his business associates, and thereby instead of distracting the enemy's forces drew fresh forces into opposition.

Nevertheless, the moral and economic results of success might well have changed the whole balance of the war but for a chain of blunders in execution almost unparalleled. For, first, Alcibiades, the author of the plan, was recalled from his joint command by the intrigues of his political enemies. Rather than return to be put on trial for sacrilege, and meet a certain death sentence, he fled to Sparta, there to advise the enemy how to thwart his own plan. And the stubborn opponent of the plan, Nicias, was left in command to carry it out! Instead, by his obstinate stupidity, he carried it to ruin.

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With her army lost at Syracuse, Athens staved off defeat at home by the use of her fleet, and in the nine years of sea warfare which followed she came within reach not only of an advantageous peace but of the restoration of her empire. Her prospects, however, were dramatically extinguished by the Spartan admiral Lysander in 405 B.C. In the words of the "Cambridge Ancient History" "his plan of campaign . . . was to avoid fighting, and reduce the Athenians to extremities by attacking their empire at its most vulnerable points. . . ." The first clause is hardly accurate, for his plan was not so much an evasion of battle as an indirect approach to it, so that he might obtain the opportunity when, and only when, the odds were heavily in his favour. By skilful and mystifying changes of course, he reached the entrance to the Dardanelles and there lay in wait for the Pontic grain-ships on their way to Athens. "Since the grain-supply of Athens was a life interest," the Athenian commanders "hurried with their entire fleet of 180 ships to safeguard it." For four successive days they tried in vain to tempt Lysander to battle, while he gave them every encouragement to think they had cornered him. Thus instead of retiring to revictual in the safe harbour of Sestos they stayed in the open strait opposite him at Aegospotamoi. On the fifth day when most of the crews had gone ashore to collect food, he suddenly sallied out, captured almost the whole fleet without a blow, and "in one single hour brought the longest of wars to an end."

Thus, in sum, in this twenty-seven years' struggle, where scores of direct approaches failed, usually to the injury of those who made them, the scales were definitely turned against Athens by Brasidas's move against her

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Chalcidice "root." The best-founded hopes of a recovery came with Alcibiades's indirect approach—on the plane of grand strategy—to Sparta's economic root in Sicily. And the *coup de grâce*, after another ten years' prolongation, was given by a tactical indirect approach at sea, which was itself the sequel to a fresh indirect approach in grand strategy. For it should be noted that the opportunity was created by menacing the Athenians' "national" lines of communication—by taking an economic objective Lysander could hope at the least to drain their strength, and through the exasperation and fear thus generated, might be able, as he did, to produce conditions favourable to surprise, and thereby obtain a swift military decision.

With the fall of the Athenian empire the next phase in Greek history is the assumption by Sparta of the headship of Greece. Our next question is, therefore, as to what was the decisive factor in ending Sparta's ascendancy. The answer is a man and his contribution to the science and art of warfare. But in the years immediately preceding the rise of Epaminondas, Thebes had released herself from Sparta's dominion by the method later christened Fabian, of refusing battle—a war policy of indirect approach, but a strategy merely of evasion—while Spartan armies wandered unopposed through Boeotia. This method gained them time to develop a picked professional force, famous as the Sacred Band, which formed the spearhead of their forces subsequently. But it also gained time and opportunity for disaffection to spread and for Athens, thereby relieved of land pressure, to concentrate her energy and man-power on the revival of her fleet. Thus in 374 the Athenian confederacy,

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which included Thebes, found Sparta willing to grant an advantageous peace. Although quickly broken through an Athenian maritime adventure, a fresh peace congress was convened three years later, by which time the Athenians were tired of war. Here Sparta regained at the council table much that she had lost on the field of war, and succeeded in isolating Thebes from her allies. Thereupon Sparta eagerly turned to crush Thebes. But on advancing into Boeotia, her army, traditionally superior in quality and actually superior in number (10,000 to 6,000) was decisively defeated at Leuctra by the new model army of Thebes under Epaminondas, who may perhaps be termed the most original genius in military history. He not only broke flagrantly with tactical methods established by the experience of centuries, but in tactics, strategy and grand strategy alike laid the foundations on which subsequent masters have built. Even his structural designs have survived or been revived. For in tactics the " oblique order " which Frederick made famous was but a slight elaboration of the method of Epaminondas. At Leuctra it was born when Epaminondas, reversing custom, placed not only his best but his most men on his left wing, and then, holding back his weak centre and right, developed a crushing superiority against one wing of the enemy—the wing where their leader stood and which thus was the key of their will.

A year after Leuctra, Epaminondas led the forces of the newly formed Arcadian League in a march upon virgin Sparta itself. This march into the heart of the Peloponnesian peninsula, so long Sparta's unchallenged domain, is distinguished by the manifold nature of its indirect approach. It was made in mid-winter and by

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three separated, but converging, columns, thus "distracting" the forces and direction of the opposition. For this alone it would be almost unique in ancient or, indeed, in pre-Napoleonic warfare. But with still deeper strategical insight, Epaminondas, after his force had united at Caryae, 20 miles short of Sparta, slipped past the capital and moved up from the rear. This move had the additional and calculated advantage of enabling the invaders to rally to themselves considerable bodies of Helots and other disaffected elements. The Spartans succeeded, however, in checking this dangerous internal movement by an emergency promise of emancipation, and the timely arrival at Sparta of strong reinforcements from her Peloponnesian allies thwarted the chance of the city falling without a set siege. Epaminondas soon realised that the Spartans would not be lured into the open, and that a prolonged investment meant the dwindling of his own heterogeneous force. He therefore relinquished the blunted strategic weapon for a more subtle weapon—a war policy of indirect approach, true grand strategy. At Mount Ithome, the natural citadel of Messenia, he founded a city as the capital of a new Messenian state, established there all the insurgent elements that had joined him, and used the booty he had gained during the invasion as an endowment for the new state. This was to be a check and counterpoise to Sparta in southern Greece, and by its secure establishment she lost half her territory and more than half her serfs. And with his subsequent foundation of Megalopolis, in Arcadia, as a further check, Sparta was hemmed in both politically and by a chain of fortresses, and the economic roots of her military supremacy were severed. When Epaminondas left the

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Peloponnese after only a few months' campaign, he had won no military victory, yet his war policy had definitely dislocated the foundations of Spartan power.

The politicians at home, however, had desired a destructive military success and were disappointed at not achieving it. And with Epaminondas's subsequent, if temporary supersession, Theban democracy, by short-sighted policy and blundering diplomacy, forfeited the advantage won for it. Thus it enabled its Arcadian allies, repudiating gratitude in growing conceit and ambition, to dispute Theban leadership, and in 362 Thebes was driven to a choice between the forcible reassertion of her authority and the sacrifice of her prestige. Her move against Arcadia caused the Greek states to divide afresh into two opposing coalitions. Happily for Thebes not only was Epaminondas at her service, but also the fruits of his grand strategy—for his creations of Messenia and Megalopolis now contributed, not merely as a check, but as a make-weight to the Theban side. Marching into the Peloponnese, he joined forces with his Peloponnesian allies at Tegea, thus placing himself between Sparta and the main forces of the anti-Theban alliance which had concentrated at Mantinea. The Spartans marched by a roundabout route to join their allies, whereupon Epaminondas made a sudden spring by night with a mobile column at Sparta itself, and was only foiled because a deserter warned the Spartans in time for them to double back to their city. He then determined to seek a decision by battle and advanced from Tegea against Mantinea, some 12 miles distant, along an hour-glass shaped valley. The enemy took up a strong position at the mile-wide "waist."

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With his advance we are on the borderline between strategy and tactics, but this is a case where arbitrary division is false, all the more because the sources of his victory are directly to be found in his indirect approach to the actual contact. At first Epaminondas marched direct towards the enemy camp, causing them to form up in battle order facing his line of approach—the line of natural expectation. But when several miles distant he suddenly changed direction to the left, turning in beneath a projecting spur. This surprise manoeuvre threatened to take in enfilade the enemy right, and, to dislocate still further their battle dispositions, he halted, making his troops ground arms as if about to encamp. The deception succeeded; the enemy were induced to relax their battle order, allowing men to fall out and the horses to be unbridled. Meanwhile, Epaminondas was actually completing his battle dispositions—similar to but improving on those of Leuctra—behind a screen of light troops. Then, on a signal, the Theban army took up its arms and swept forward—to a victory already assured by the dislocation of the enemy's balance. Unhappily, Epaminondas himself fell in the moment of victory, and in his death contributed not the least of his lessons to subsequent generations by an exceptionally dramatic and convincing proof that an army and a state succumb quickest to paralysis of the brain.

The next decisive campaign is that, just over 20 years later, which yielded to Macedon the supremacy of Greece. All the more significant because of its momentous results, this campaign is an illuminating example of how policy and strategy can assist each other and also how strategy can turn topographical obstacles from its disadvantage to

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its advantage. The challenger, if still Greek, was an "outsider," while Thebes and Athens were united in the effort to form a Pan-Hellenic League to oppose the growing power of Philip of Macedon, finding a foreign backer in a Persian king—strange comment upon past history and human nature. And it is once more the challenger who is seen to have grasped the value of the indirect approach. Even the pretext for his attempt to secure the supremacy was indirect, for he was merely invited by the Amphictyonic Council to aid in punishing Amphissa, in western Boeotia, for a sacrilegious offence. And it is probable that Philip himself prompted this invitation, which rallied Thebes and Athens against him, but ensured at least the benevolent neutrality of other states.

After marching southwards Philip suddenly diverged at Cytinium from the route to Amphissa—the natural line of expectation, and instead occupied and fortified Elatea, an initial change of course which foreshadowed his wider political aims, but suggests also a strategic motive which the event supports. The allied Thebans and Boeotians barred the passes into Boeotia, both the western route from Cytinium to Amphissa, and the eastern pass of Parapotamii, leading from Elatea to Chaeronea. The first route may be likened to the upper stroke of an L, the route from Cytinium to Elatea as the lower stroke, and the prolongation across the pass to Chaeronea as the upward finish of the lower stroke.

Before initiating a further military move, Philip took steps further to weaken his opponents, politically, by forwarding the restoration of Phocian communities earlier dispersed by the Thebans, and morally by getting himself proclaimed as the champion of the God of Delphi.

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Then he sprang suddenly, in the spring of 338 B.C., after clearing his path by a stratagem. Having already, by occupying Elatea, distracted the strategic attention of the enemy towards the eastern route—now the line of natural expectation—he distracted the tactical attention of the force barring the western route by arranging that a letter which spoke of his urgent return to Thrace should fall into its hands. Then he moved swiftly from Cytinium, crossed the pass by night and debouched into Western Boeotia at Amphissa. Pressing on to Naupactus, he opened up his communications with the sea. He was now on the rear of, if at a distance from, the defenders of the eastern pass, who, thereupon, fell back from Parapotamii, not only because if they stayed there their line of retreat might be cut, but also because there was no apparent value in staying. But Philip once more diverged from the line of expectation, and made yet another indirect approach. For instead of pressing eastwards from Amphissa through hilly country which would have aided resistance, he switched his army back through Cytinium and Elatea, turned southward through the now unguarded pass of Parapotamii, and descended upon the enemy's army at Chaeronea. His tactical victory was a natural consequence and the Macedonian supremacy was established in Greece.

Fate cut him off before he could extend it to Asia, and it was left to his son Alexander to realise the campaign that he had intended. The latter had as legacy not only a plan and a model instrument—the army which Philip had developed—but a conception of grand strategy. Another heirloom, of decided material value, was the possession of the Dardanelles bridgeheads, seized under

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Philip's direction in 336 B.C. If we study a chart of Alexander's advance we see that it was a series of acute zig-zags. For this indirectness a study of its history shows that there were deeper reasons than the logistical. Indeed his logistical strategy is direct and devoid of subtlety. The cause would appear to be, first, that in the youthful Alexander, bred to kingship and triumph, there was more of the Homeric hero than in the other great captains of history; and, still more perhaps, that he had such justifiable confidence in the superiority of his instrument and his own battle-handling of it that he felt no need to dislocate preparatorily his adversaries' strategic balance. His lessons for posterity lie at the two poles—war-policy and tactics.

Starting from the eastern shore of the Dardanelles, he first moved southward and defeated the Persian covering force at the Granicus river, where the enemy at least had the shrewdness to appreciate that if they could concentrate against, and kill the over-bold Alexander himself, they would paralyze the invasion at its birth. And they failed but narrowly in this purpose.

Alexander next moved south on Sardis, as the political and economic key to Lydia, and thence west to Ephesus, restoring to these Greek towns their former democratic government and rights, as a means to secure his own rear in the most economic way.

He had now returned to the Aegean coast, and he pursued his way first south and then eastward along it through Caria, Lycia, and Pamphylia. In this approach his object was to dislocate the Persian command of the sea by depriving the Persian fleet of freedom to move through depriving it of its bases. Coincidently,

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by freeing these seaports he would deprive the enemy fleet of much of its man-power, which was recruited from them.

Beyond Pamphylia the coastline of the rest of Asia Minor was practically barren of ports, and hence he now turned north again to Phrygia and eastwards as far as Ancyra (modern Angora), consolidating his hold on and securing his rear in central Asia Minor. This done, he turned south through the Cilician " Gates " on the direct route toward Syria, where Darius was concentrating to oppose him. Here, through the failure of his intelligence service, and his own assumption that the Persians would await him in the plains, Alexander was strategically outmanoeuvred. While Alexander made a direct approach, Darius made an indirect, and, moving up the higher reaches of the Euphrates, came through the Amanic Gates on Alexander's rear. The latter, who had been so careful to secure his chain of bases, now found himself cut off from them. But, turning back, he extricated himself at the battle of Issus by the superiority of his tactics and his tactical instrument. And no great captain used the indirect approach more in his tactics. Thereafter he again took an indirect route, down the coast of Syria instead of pressing on to Babylon, the heart of the Persian power. Grand strategy clearly dictated his course, for if he had dislocated, he had not yet destroyed the Persian command of the sea, and so long as it existed it might be the means of indirect approach to his own rear. And Greece, especially Athens, was unpleasantly restive. His advance into Phoenicia disrupted the Persian fleet, for what remained was mainly Phoenician. Most of it came over to him and the Tyrian portion fell with the fall of Tyre. Even then

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he again moved southward, into Egypt, a move more difficult to explain on naval grounds, except as an additional precaution, but more intelligible in the light of his political purpose of occupying the Persian empire and consolidating his own in substitution. For this, Egypt was an immense economic asset. At last he marched northwards again to Aleppo, then turned eastwards and made a direct approach against the new army which Darius had assembled near Mosul. Once again, at Gaugamela, Alexander and his army showed their complete superiority to an army that was the least serious of the obstacles in Alexander's path to his " grand strategic " goal. The occupation of Babylon followed, and Alexander's succeeding campaigns, until he reached the border of India, were militarily a " mopping up " of the Persian empire, if politically the consolidation of his own. But he forced the Uxian defile and the Persian " Gates " by indirect approaches, and when he was confronted on the Hydaspes by Porus, he produced a masterpiece of deception which attested the ripening of his own strategical powers. By laying in stores of corn and by distributing his army widely along the western bank, he mystified his opponent as to his intentions. Repeated noisy marches and counter-marches of Alexander's cavalry first kept Porus on tenterhooks and then, by repetition, dulled his reaction, as by a sleeping draught. Having thus fixed Porus to a definite and static position, Alexander left the bulk of his army opposite it, and himself made a night crossing 18 miles upstream, and by the surprise of this indirect approach dislocated the mental and moral equilibrium of Porus, and the moral and physical equilibrium of his army. Thus, in the

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ensuing battle, Alexander, with but a fraction of his own army, was enabled to defeat almost the whole of his enemy's. But for this dislocation there would have been, neither in theory nor in fact, a justification for Alexander's exposure of an isolated fraction to the risk of defeat in detail.

In the long wars of the "successors" which followed Alexander's death and rent his empire asunder, there are numerous examples of the indirect approach, for his generals were abler men than Napoleon's marshals and their experience had led them to grasp the deeper meaning of economy of force. But in order to be a fair test this analysis is restricted to the decisive campaigns of ancient history, and in these wars only the last, in 301 B.C., can be definitely so termed. The claim of this to decisiveness cannot be challenged, for in the measured words of the "Cambridge Ancient History," by it "the struggle between the central power and the dynasts was ended" and "the dismemberment of the Graeco-Macedonian world became inevitable."

By 302 B.C. Antigonus, who claimed to stand in Alexander's place, was at last within reach of his goal of securing the empire for himself. Expanding from his original Satrapy of Phrygia, he had won control of Asia from the Aegean to the Euphrates. Opposing him, Seleucus had held on to Babylon with difficulty; Ptolemy was left only with Egypt; Lysimachus was more secure in Thrace, but Cassander, the most formidable of the rival generals and the keystone of the resistance to Antigonus' almost realised dream, had been driven from Greece by Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, and one who, in many characteristics, was a second Alexander. If

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Cassander, as the founder of Salonika, has no claim to the regard of British soldiers, his strategy compels admiration where his taste does not. Called upon for unconditional surrender, he replied by a stroke of strategic genius. The plan was arranged at a conference with Lysimachus, and Ptolemy's aid towards it was sought, while he in turn got in touch with Seleucus by sending messengers on camels across the Arabian desert.

Cassander kept only 31,000 men to face Demetrius' invasion of Thessaly—with 57,000—and lent the rest of his army to Lysimachus. The latter crossed the Dardanelles eastwards, while Seleucus moved westwards towards Asia Minor, his army including 500 war elephants, obtained from India. Ptolemy moved northwards into Syria, but on receiving a false report of Lysimachus's defeat, returned to Egypt. Nevertheless the convergent advance from both sides on the heart of his empire constrained Antigonus to recall Demetrius urgently from Thessaly, where Cassander had succeeded in keeping him at bay until the indirect move against his strategic rear in Asia Minor called him off—as Scipio's fundamentally similar move later forced Hannibal's return to Africa. And at the battle of Ipsus, in Phrygia, Cassander's strategy was consummated by a decisive tactical victory, ending in the death of Antigonus and the flight of Demetrius. In this battle, it is worth remark, the war elephants were the decisive instrument and, fittingly, the tactics of the victor were essentially indirect. When the campaign had opened the scales were heavily weighted and steeply tilted on the side of Antigonus. Rarely has the balance of fortune so dramatically changed. And the unmistakable explanation is that Antigonus's balance had been upset by Cassander's

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indirect approach. This dislocated the mental equilibrium of Antigonus, the moral equilibrium of his troops and his subjects, and the physical equilibrium of his military dispositions.

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CHAPTER III

ROMAN WARS—HANNIBAL, SCIPIO, AND CAESAR

THE next conflict decisive in its results and in the effect on European history is the struggle between Rome and Carthage. And in this the Hannibalic, or Second Punic, War is the determining period. This falls into a series of phases or campaigns, each decisive in turning the current of the war into a fresh course, and the last decisive, not only of the whole war, but in turning the whole current of European history. The first phase opens with Hannibal's advance from Spain towards the Alps and Italy, and the natural closing point appears to be the annihilating victory of Trasimene, which left Rome unshielded, save by her walls and garrison, to Hannibal's immediate approach had he chosen to make it.

The reason commonly assigned for Hannibal's initial choice of the circuitous and arduous land route in preference to the direct sea route is that of Rome's supposed "command of the sea." But it is absurd to apply the modern interpretation of this phrase to an era when ships were so primitive and their ability to intercept a foe at sea so uncertain. Even to-day such "command" has still distinct limitations. But beyond this there is a significant side-light in a passage of Polybius (iii. 97) when, speaking of the very time of Trasimene, he refers to the Roman Senate's anxiety lest the Carthaginians "should obtain a more complete mastery of the sea."

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And even in the closing stage of the war, after the Romans had won repeated victories at sea, had deprived the Carthaginian fleet of all its Spanish bases, and were established in Africa, they were powerless to prevent Mago landing an expeditionary force on the Genoese Riviera or Hannibal sailing tranquilly back to Africa.

It seems more probable that Hannibal's indirect and overland route of invasion was due to the aim of rallying the Celts of Northern Italy against Rome. Next, we should note the geographical indirectness even of this land march, and the advantage gained thereby. The Romans had despatched the consul Publius Scipio, father of Africanus, to Marseilles with the object of barring Hannibal's path at the Rhone. Hannibal, however, not only crossed this formidable river unexpectedly high up, but then turned still further northward, to take the more devious and difficult route by the Isère valley instead of the straighter but more easily barred routes near the Riviera. When Scipio arrived at the crossing three days later he was " astonished to find the enemy gone ; for he had persuaded himself that they would never venture to take this route into Italy." By prompt decision and speedy movement, leaving part of his army behind, he got back to Italy by sea in time to meet Hannibal on the plains of Lombardy, but here Hannibal had the advantage of suitable ground for his superior cavalry. The victories of the Ticinus and the Trebia were the sequel, and their moral effect brought Hannibal recruits and supplies—" in great abundance." Master of the north of Italy, Hannibal wintered there. The following spring, anticipating Hannibal's continued advance, the new consuls took their armies, the one to Ariminum (Rimini) on the Adriatic,

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the other to Arretium (Arezzo) in Etruria—thereby commanding the eastern and western routes respectively by which Hannibal could advance towards Rome. Hannibal decided on the Etrurian route, but instead of taking one of the normal roads, he made thorough enquiries, and " ascertained that the other roads leading into Etruria were long and well-known to the enemy, but that one which led through the marshes was short, and would bring them upon Flaminius by surprise. This was what suited his peculiar genius, and he therefore decided to take this route. But when the report was spread in his army that the commander was going to lead them through the marshes, every soldier felt alarmed. . . ." Normal soldiers always prefer the known to the unknown ; Hannibal was an abnormal general, and hence, like other great captains, chose to face the most hazardous *conditions* rather than the certainty of meeting the enemy in a position of their own choosing.

For four days and three nights Hannibal's army marched " through a route which was under water," suffering terribly from fatigue and enforced want of sleep, and losing many men and more horses. But on emerging it found the Roman army still passively encamped at Arretium. Hannibal attempted no direct attack. Instead, as Polybius tells us, " he calculated that, if he passed the camp and made a descent into the district beyond, partly for fear of popular reproach and partly from personal irritation, Flaminius would be unable to endure watching passively the devastation of the country and would spontaneously follow him." Here we have a mental application of the manoeuvre against the enemy's rear, based on searching enquiries about his opponent's

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character, and it was followed by a physical execution. For, pressing along the road to Rome, Hannibal laid and executed the greatest ambush in history. In the misty dawn of the following morning, the Roman army, in hot pursuit along the hill-bordered skirts of the Lake of Trasimene, was caught by surprise in a trap front and rear, and annihilated. Readers of history all remember the victory, but are apt to overlook the mental thrust that made it possible. But Polybius, although lacking our advantage of two thousand more years' experience of warfare, drew the correct moral, "for as a ship, if you deprive it of its steersman, falls with all its crew into the hands of the enemy; so, with an army in war, if you outwit or out-manoeuvre its general, the whole will often fall into your hands."

We now enter the second phase of the war. Why, after Trasimene, Hannibal did not march on Rome is a mystery of history, and all solutions are but speculation. All we know for certain is that the succeeding years were spent by Hannibal in trying to break Rome's hold on her Italian allies and to weld them into a coalition against her. Victories were merely a moral impetus towards this end. The tactical advantage would always be assured if he could obtain battle under conditions favourable for his superior cavalry.

This phase opens with a Roman, if strangely un-Roman, form of the indirect approach, a form which has given to history and to subsequent imitations, many of them bad, the generic title "Fabian strategy"—although, strictly, it was a war-policy, not strategy. The war policy of Fabius was not merely an evasion of battle to gain time, but calculated for its effect on the moral of the enemy and

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still more for its effect on their potential allies. It was an indirect military approach to a political rather than a military end. Fabius realised Hannibal's military superiority too well to risk a military decision and, while seeking to avoid this, aimed by military pin-pricks to wear down the invader's endurance and, coincidently, prevent his strength being recruited from the Italian cities or his Carthaginian base. And the key condition of the strategy by which this war policy was carried out was that the Romans should keep always to the hills so as to nullify Hannibal's decisive superiority in cavalry. Thus this phase becomes a mental tug-of-war between the Hannibalic and the Fabian forms of the indirect approach. Once, before Cannae, Hannibal succeeded in luring his opponents to battle in the plain, and the result certainly sated the appetite of a Senate and generals more battle-craving than Fabius had been. But otherwise Rome's inflexible resolution in pursuing her strategy of evasion at any sacrifice combined with the conditions of the age, with Hannibal's own comparative weakness, and with his situation as the invader—of a primitively organised land—to thwart his aim. When Scipio later retorted with a counter-invasion of Africa he found the more highly developed economic structure of Carthage an aid to his purpose.

The second phase closes with yet another type of the strategic indirect approach, when the consul Nero bluffed the arch-bluffer, and, slipping away from before him, concentrated by forced marches against the "new partner," Hasdrubal, who had just arrived with his army in Northern Italy. After destroying him at the Metaurus and with him Hannibal's hope of ultimate victory, Nero

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was back in his camp opposite Hannibal before the latter realised that it had been empty. Thereafter stalemate reigned in Italy—the third phase. During five years Hannibal stood at bay in southern Italy, and a succession of Roman generals retired licking their wounds from their direct approaches to the lion's lair.

But meantime Publius Scipio the younger had been sent to Spain on a desperate venture to redeem the disaster which had overtaken his dead father and uncle, and to maintain if possible Rome's slender foothold in the north-east corner of Spain against the victorious and greatly superior Carthaginian forces there. By swiftness of movement, superior tactics, and skilful diplomacy he converted this defensive object into an offensive if indirect thrust at Carthage and Hannibal. For Spain was Hannibal's real strategic base; there he had trained his armies and thence he looked for reinforcements. By a masterly combination of surprise and timing Scipio had first deprived the Carthaginian armies of Cartagena, their main base in Spain, as a prelude to the deprivation of their allies and the overthrow of their armies. Then, returning to Italy and elected consul, he was ready for the second and decisive indirect approach, long conceived by him, against Hannibal's strategic "rear." Fabius, now old and set in mind, voiced the orthodox view, urging that Scipio's duty was to attack Hannibal in Italy. "Why do you not apply yourself to this, and carry the war in a straightforward manner to the place where Hannibal is, rather than pursue that roundabout course, according to which you expect that when you have crossed into Africa, Hannibal will follow you thither?" Scipio gained from the Senate a bare permission to cross into Africa, but was

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refused leave to levy troops. In consequence he set out on his expedition with but 7,000 volunteers and two disgraced legions which had been relegated to garrison duty in Sicily in penance for their share in the defeat at Cannae. On landing in Africa he was met by the only cavalry force which Carthage had immediately available. By a cleverly graduated retreat he lured it into a trap and destroyed it, thereby not only gaining time to consolidate his position but also creating a moral impression which, on the one hand, induced the home authorities to back him more generously and, on the other, shook the hold of Carthage upon her African allies, apart from the most powerful, Syphax.

Next, confronted by a newly raised enemy force, far superior in numbers but composed of Hasdrubal's new levies and Syphax's irregulars, Scipio fell back to a small peninsula, where he fortified an ancient prototype of the Lines of Torres Vedras. Here he first lulled the commanders of the investing army into a feeling of security, then distracted their attention by ostensible preparations for a sea-borne thrust against Utica, and finally made a night manoeuvre and attack upon the enemy's two camps. The demoralising and disorganising effect of the surprise was intensified by Scipio's subtle calculation in launching first the attack on Syphax's less orderly camp, where the swarm of huts overflowed the fortified boundaries and were made of inflammable reeds and matting. The confusion caused by setting fire to these enabled the assailants to penetrate the camp proper, while the blaze drew Hasdrubal's Carthaginians to open their own gates and pour out to the rescue, imagining that the conflagration was accidental—as when darkness fell all had been quiet and

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normal in the Roman camp seven miles distant. Only when the gates of the Carthaginian camp were thus opened did Scipio launch upon it the second part of his attack, so gaining entry without the cost of making a breach.

If we have here outwardly crossed the border-line from strategy into tactics, this overwhelming victory is in reality the supreme example in history, save perhaps Ilerda, where strategy not merely paved the way for a victory in battle but executed it—where, indeed, the victory was merely the last act of the strategic approach. For an unresisting massacre is not a battle.

After his bloodless triumph Scipio did not at once move on Carthage. Why? If history does not give a direct answer it affords clearer grounds for a deduction than in the case of Hannibal's neglect of Rome after Trasimene and Cannae. Unless there is opportunity and favourable prospect for a quick surprise assault, a siege is the most uneconomic of all operations of war. History even down to 1914-1918 attests this. And if the enemy has still a field army capable of intervening, a siege is also the most dangerous, for until it is crowned by success the assailant is progressively weakening himself out of proportion to his enemy.

Scipio had to reckon not only with the walls of Carthage but with the return of Hannibal—a contingency, indeed, which was his calculated aim. If he could compel the capitulation of Carthage before Hannibal could return, it would be a great advantage, but it must be by a moral, and hence cheap, dislocation of its resistance, not by a heavy physical expenditure of force which might leave him still facing unbreached walls when Hannibal descended on his rear.

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Instead of moving on Carthage he systematically lopped off its supply areas and allies. Above all, the relentless pursuit and overthrow of Syphax was a detachment of force which abundantly justified itself, for by restoring his own ally, Masinissa, to the throne of Numidia he ensured for himself the cavalry resources to counter Hannibal's best weapon.

To reinforce these forms of moral suasion he advanced to Tunis, in sight of Carthage, as " a most effective means of striking the Carthaginians with terror and dismay." Coming on top of the other indirect forms of pressure it was sufficient to dislocate the Carthaginians' will to resist, and they sued for peace. But while awaiting ratification in Rome, the provisional peace was broken when Carthage had news of Hannibal's return, and of his landing at Leptis. Scipio was thus placed in a difficult and dangerous position, for although he had not weakened himself by an assault on Carthage, he had let Masinissa go back to Numidia to consolidate his new kingdom—after Carthage had accepted Scipio's peace terms. In such circumstances an orthodox general would either have taken the offensive, in order to prevent Hannibal reaching Carthage, or have stood on the defensive to await relief. Instead, Scipio took a course that, plotted geographically, looks fantastic. For if Hannibal's direct route from Leptis to Carthage be pictured as travelling up the right-hand stroke of an inverted V (∧), Scipio, leaving a detachment to hold his camp near Carthage, marched away down the left-hand stroke of the ∧. Truly a most indirect approach ! But this route, the Bagradas valley, took him into the heart of Carthage's main source of supplies from the interior. And it also brought him nearer, with every step he marched,

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to the Numidian reinforcements which Masinissa was bringing in response to an urgent summons. The move attained its strategic object. The senate of Carthage, aghast at the news that this vital territory was being progressively devastated, sent messengers urging Hannibal to intervene at once and bring Scipio to battle. And Hannibal, although he told them in answer "to leave such matters to him," was nevertheless drawn by the compulsion of conditions—created by Scipio—to move west by forced marches to meet Scipio instead of north to Carthage. Thus Scipio had lured him to an area of his own choosing, where Hannibal lacked the material reinforcement, stable pivot, and shelter in case of defeat which he would have had if the battle had taken place near Carthage. Still Scipio was not content. He had thrust on his enemy the need of seeking battle, and he meant to exploit this moral advantage to the full. When Masinissa joined him, almost coincidently with Hannibal's arrival, he fell back instead of going forward, and thus drew Hannibal to a camping ground where the Carthaginians suffered from lack of water and to a battle-ground in the plain where Scipio's newly gained advantage in cavalry could have full play. He had taken the first two tricks; on the battle-field of Zama (more correctly Naraggara) he was enabled to take the rubber by tactically over-trumping Hannibal's former "cavalry" trump. And when tactical defeat for the first time overtook Hannibal, the consequences of his preliminary strategic defeat also overtook him, for there was no sheltering fortress at hand where the defeated army could rally before the pursuit annihilated it. The bloodless surrender of Carthage followed.

The campaign of Zama made Rome the dominant

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power in the Mediterranean world, and the subsequent extension of that supremacy, and its translation into suzerainty, continued without serious check, if not without recurrent threat. Thus 202 B.C. forms a natural conclusion for a survey of the turning-points and their military causes in the history of the ancient world. Ultimately the tide of Roman expansion was to ebb, then that universal empire was to fall to pieces, partly under barbarian pressure but still more from internal decay.

During the period of " the Decline and Fall," during the centuries when Europe was shedding its old single coloured skin for a new skin of many colours, there is profit to be got from a study of the military leadership. Sometimes much profit, as in the case of Belisarius and later generals of the Byzantine empire. But, on the whole, decisiveness is too difficult of definition, turning-points too obscure, purposeful strategy too uncertain, and records too unsafe, to provide a basis for scientific deductions. Before closing the examination of ancient strategy there is, however, one internal war that calls for examination, both because it was the stage for one of the undisputed Great Captains of history and because it vitally affected the course of history. For as the second Punic War gave the world to Rome, so the Civil War of 50-45 B.C. gave the Roman world to Caesar—and Caesarism. When Caesar crossed the Rubicon in December 50 B.C. his power rested only upon Gaul and Illyricum ; Pompey was in control of Italy and the rest of Rome's dominions. Caesar had nine legions, but only one was with him at Ravenna ; the remainder were far away in Gaul. Pompey had ten legions in Italy, seven in Spain, and many detachments throughout the empire.

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But those in Italy had only cadres present with the eagles —and a legion in hand was worth more than two unmobilized. Caesar has been criticised for his rashness in moving south with such a fraction of his army. But time and surprise are the two most vital elements in war, and beyond his appreciation of them, Caesar's strategy was essentially guided by his understanding of Pompey's mind.

From Ravenna there were two routes to Rome, and Caesar took the longer and less direct—down the Adriatic coast—but he moved fast. As he passed through this populous district many of the levies being assembled for Pompey, joined him instead—a parallel with Napoleon in 1815. Morally dislocated, the Pompeian party quitted Rome, leaving the public treasure behind and fell back to Capua, while Caesar, interposing between the enemy's advanced force at Corfinium and their main force under Pompey round Luceria, secured another bloodless transfer of strength to himself. He then continued his advance south towards Luceria, the snowball process likewise continuing; but his advance, now become direct, stampeded the enemy into a retreat to the fortified port of Brundisium (Brindisi) on the heel of Italy. And the very vigour with which he followed them up hastened Pompey's decision to retire across the Adriatic to Greece. Thus an excess of directness and a want of art in the second phase had robbed Caesar of his chance of ending the war in one campaign, and condemned him to four more years of obstinate warfare all round the Mediterranean basin.

The second campaign now opened. Caesar, instead of following up Pompey directly, turned his attention and forces to Spain. For thus concentrating against the "junior partner" he has been much criticised. But his

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estimate of Pompey's inactivity was justified by the event. This time Caesar began too bluntly, and a direct advance on the enemy's main forces at Ilerda, just across the Pyrenees, enabled them to decline battle. An assault failed, and Caesar only averted disaster by his personal intervention. But the moral of his men continued to sink until, just in time, Caesar changed his method of approach. Instead of making any further attempt to press the siege, he devoted his energies to creating an artificial ford which enabled him to command both banks of the river Sicoris, on which Ilerda stood. This threatened tightening of his grip on their sources of supply persuaded Pompey's lieutenants to retire in time. Caesar let them slip away unpressed, but instead sent his Gallic cavalry to get on their rear and delay their march. Then, rather than assault the bridge held by the enemy's rearguard, he took the risk of leading his legions through the deep ford, which was regarded as only traversable by cavalry, and marching in a wide circuit during the night got across the enemy's line of retreat. Even then he did not attempt battle, but contented himself with heading off each attempt to take a fresh line of retreat, using his cavalry to harass and delay them while his legions marched wide. Firmly holding in check the eagerness of his own men for battle, he at the same time encouraged fraternisation with the men of the other side, growing more and more weary, hungry and depressed. Finally, when he had shepherded them back in the direction of Ilerda and forced them to take up a position devoid of water, they capitulated. It had been a strategic victory as bloodless for the defeated as for the victor—and the less men slain of the enemy, the more potential adherents and recruits for Caesar. Despite

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the substitution of manoeuvre for direct assaults upon his enemy the campaign had cost him only six weeks of his time. But in his next he changed his strategy; and it lasted eight months before victory crowned his arms, and even then was not complete.

Instead of advancing into Greece by the indirect land route through Illyricum, Caesar decided on the direct sea route. Thereby he gained time initially but lost it ultimately. Pompey had originally a large fleet, Caesar none, and although he had ordered the construction or collection of ships on a large scale, only part were available. Rather than wait, Caesar sailed from Brindisi with barely half his assembled force. On landing at Palaeste he headed up the coast for the important seaport of Dyrrachium, but Pompey just reached there first. Fortunately for Caesar, Pompey was as slow as ever, and missed the chance of using his superior strength before Antony with the other half of Caesar's army could evade the enemy fleet and join him. And even when Antony landed on the other side of Dyrrachium, Pompey, though centrally placed, failed to prevent Caesar and Antony effecting a junction at Tirana. Pompey fell back, followed by his opponent, who offered battle in vain. Thereafter the two armies lay facing each other on the south bank of the river Genusus, which itself was south of Dyrrachium. The deadlock was broken by a wide manoeuvre. Making a long and difficult circuit of some 45 miles through the hills, Caesar succeeded in placing himself between Dyrrachium and Pompey before the latter, with only a straight 25 miles to cover, awoke to the move and got back thither. But Caesar did not press his advantage, and as Pompey had the sea for supplies there was no inducement to a man

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of his temperament to attack Caesar. Caesar then took the original but singularly profitless course of constructing extensive lines of investment round an army which was not only stronger than his own, but which could supply itself easily, or move away, by sea whenever it wished.

Even Pompey the passive could not forgo the opportunity of striking at weak points of such a thin line, and his success led Caesar to redeem it by a concentrated counter-attack which failed disastrously. Only Pompey's inertia saved Caesar's demoralised troops from dissolution.

Caesar's men wanted to be led afresh against the enemy, but Caesar had learnt his lesson, and after making good his retreat reverted to a strategy of indirect approach. It was Pompey's opportunity to apply it also, by recrossing the Adriatic and regaining control of Italy, where his path would have been smoothed by the moral impression of Caesar's defeat. Caesar showed his appreciation of the danger of this *westward* move. He moved rapidly *eastward* against Pompey's lieutenant, Scipio Nasica, who was in Macedonia. Pompey, thereby mentally dominated, was drawn to follow Caesar and, by taking a different route, come to Scipio's support. Caesar arrived first, but rather than throw his troops against fortifications, he allowed Pompey to come up. This seeming loss of an opportunity according to the canons of warfare may also have been due to Caesar's view that after Dyrrachium a " strong " inducement would be needed to make Pompey give battle in the open. If so, he was right, for Pompey's lieutenants barely persuaded him to this course, although he had a two to one superiority in numbers. Just as Caesar had prepared a series of manoeuvres to create the opportunity, Pompey advanced and gave it to him, at Pharsalus. For

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Caesar's interest, the battle was undoubtedly premature, and the closeness of the issue was the measure of its prematurity. Caesar's indirect approach had been made to restore the strategic balance, and a further one was needed to upset Pompey's balance.

After the victory of Pharsalus, Caesar chased Pompey across the Dardanelles, through Asia Minor, and thence across the Mediterranean to Alexandria, where Ptolemy obligingly assassinated him, thus saving Caesar much trouble. But Caesar forfeited the advantage by intervening in the quarrel between brother Ptolemy and sister Cleopatra over the Egyptian succession, thereby wasting eight months in an entirely unnecessary war. It would seem that Caesar's recurrent and deep-rooted fault was his concentration in pursuing the objective immediately in front of his eyes to the neglect of his wider object. Strategically he was an ancient Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and the latter with his excess of directness was too apt to assert himself.

The interval allowed the Pompeian forces to rally, and obtain a new lease of life in Africa and Spain. In Africa Caesar's difficulties were increased by the " direct action " already adopted by his lieutenant Curio. After landing, and winning an initial victory, Curio had let himself be lured into a trap by King Juba, ally of the Pompeian party, and there exterminated. Caesar opened his African campaign with equal directness, impetuosity, and insufficiency of force as in his Greek campaign, ran his head into the noose as usual, was extricated from it by his usual combination of luck and tactical skill. After this he settled down in a fortified camp near Ruspina to await the arrival of his other legions, refusing all temptation to

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battle. The Dr. Jekyll of bloodsaving manoeuvre then became uppermost in Caesar and for several months, even after his reinforcements arrived, he pursued a strategy of extreme but narrow indirectness of approach, manoeuvring repeatedly to inflict a series of pin-pricks whose wearing and depressing effect on the enemy's morale was shown in the swelling stream of desertions. At last, by a somewhat wider indirect approach, to the enemy's important base at Thapsus, he created a favourable opportunity for battle, and his troops—taking the bit in their teeth—launched the attack and won the battle without higher direction. In the Spanish campaign which followed, and closed the war, Caesar from the outset strove to avoid loss of life and manoeuvred ceaselessly within narrow limits to work the enemy into a position where he could make his battle " cast " with the dice loaded for him. He gained it at Munda, and gained the victory, but the closeness of the struggle and the heavy cost of life therein incurred point the distinction between economy of force and mere thriftiness of force. Caesar's indirectness of approach appears narrow and wanting in surprise. In each of his campaigns he strained the enemy's moral but he did not dislocate it. And the reason would appear to be that he was more concerned to aim at the mind of the enemy's troops than at the mind of their command. But if his campaigns serve to bring out the distinction between the two qualities of indirect approach—to the enemy and to the enemy's command—they also bring out most forcibly the difference between a direct and an indirect approach. For Caesar met failure each time he relied on the direct and retrieved it each time he resorted to the indirect.

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CHAPTER IV

MEDIEVAL WARS

THIS chapter serves merely as a link between the cycles of ancient and modern history, for tempting as are several of the medieval campaigns the sources for our knowledge are far more exiguous and less reliable than in earlier or later times. For scientific truth in the deduction of causes and effects the safe course is to base our analysis of history on established facts and to pass over certain periods, even at the sacrifice of valuable confirmatory evidence, where it is necessary to choose between conflicting textual or historical criticism of the sources. It is true that the gusts of controversy have raged round the tactical rather than the strategical details of medieval military history, but the dust thus raised is apt to envelop both in the view of the ordinary student of war, and to make him excessively and unnecessarily dubious of deductions drawn from this period. But, without including it within our strict analysis, we may touch lightly upon certain of its episodes as a means to suggest their potential interest and profit.

In the West during the Middle Ages the military spirit of feudal " chivalry " was inimical to art, but the drab stupidity of its military course is lightened by a few bright gleams—no fewer perhaps in proportion than at any other period in history.

The Normans shed some of the earliest gleams and their descendants continued to irradiate the course of medieval warfare in preference to shedding Norman

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blood; at least the value they put on it led them to expend brains in substitution for blood with notable profit.

The date which every schoolboy knows, if he knows no other, 1066, was illumined by strategy and tactics as skilful as their result was decisive—decisive not only on the immediate issue but on the whole course of history. William's invasion of England profited from a strategic distraction, and thereby gained at the outset the virtues of an indirect approach. This distraction was the landing of King Harold's rebel brother Tostig and his ally Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, on the Yorkshire coast. Although this had seemed less immediate a danger than William's invasion it matured earlier, and thus gave added effectiveness to William's plans, even though it was promptly defeated. Two days after the annihilation of the Norse invaders at Stamford Bridge, William landed on the Sussex coast. Now came William's first stroke of genius. Instead of advancing northward, he lured Harold into a precipitate dash southwards, with only a fraction of his force, by ravaging the lands of Kent and Sussex. The further south Harold came and the sooner he gave battle the further in distance and time would he be separated from his reinforcements. The calculation was justified and William brought Harold to battle within sight of the Channel coast, and decided the tactical issue by an indirect approach—ordering a feigned flight by part of his force which led his opponents to dislocate their own dispositions. And in the final phase William's device of high angle archery fire which caused Harold's death might be termed an indirect fire approach.

William's strategy after this victory is equally signifi-

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cant, for instead of marching direct on London he first secured Dover and his own sea communications, and on reaching the outskirts of London avoided any direct assault, but instead made a circle, and a circular swathe of devastation, round it to the west and then to the north, so that, threatened with starvation, the capital surrendered when William had reached Berkhampstead.

The next century witnessed a further proof of Norman genius for war, and one of the most astonishing campaigns in history. This was the conquest of the greater part of Ireland, as well as the repulse of a strong Norse invasion, by Earl " Strongbow " and a few hundred knights from the Welsh marches, an achievement remarkable not only for the extreme slenderness of the means and the extreme difficulty of the forest and bog country, but for the adaptability with which the conquerors recast and reversed the conventional feudal methods of war. They showed their skill and calculation by the way in which they repeatedly lured their opponents to battle in open ground where their mounted charges had full effect, by the way they exploited feigned retreats, diversions, rear attacks to break up the opposing formation, and by the strategic surprises, night attacks and use of archery to overcome opposition when they could not lure an enemy from the shelter of his defences.

The thirteenth century, however, is more plentiful still in strategic fruits. The first were gleaned in 1216 when King John saved his kingdom, after almost losing it, by a campaign wherein pure strategy was unmixed with battles. His means were mobility, the strong resisting power then possessed by fortresses, and the psychological power inherent in the dislike of the townsmen for the barons and

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their foreign ally, Louis of France. When Louis, after landing in east Kent, occupied London and Winchester, John was too weak to oppose him in battle, and most of the country was dominated by the barons. But John still preserved the fortresses of Windsor, Reading, Wallingford and Oxford, which commanded the line of the Thames and separated the baronial forces north and south of it, while the key stronghold of Dover remained untaken in Louis' rear. John had fallen back to Dorset, but when the situation became clearer he marched north in July to Worcester, securing the line of the Severn and thus establishing a barrage to prevent the tide of rebellion flowing farther to the west and south-west. Thence he moved east along the already secured line of the Thames as if to relieve Windsor.

To confirm the besiegers in this belief he sent a detachment of Welsh archers to fire into their camp at night, while he himself swerved north-east and, thanks to this start, won the race to Cambridge. He was now able to establish a further barrage across the routes to the north, while the main French forces were tied to the siege of Dover, and his success in circumscribing and contracting the area of opposition and disaffection spelt the failure of the rebels and their ally, even though John himself died in October. If he died of a surfeit of lampreys, they died of a surfeit of strategic strongholds.

The next successful baronial insurrection was broken by the masterly strategy of Prince Edward, later Edward I, in 1265. The sequel to King Henry III's defeat at Lewes had been to establish the supremacy of the baronial party throughout most of England, except on the Welsh marches. Thither Simon de Montfort marched, crossing

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the Severn and pursuing his triumphant path as far as Newport. Prince Edward, who had escaped from the baronial army to join his adherents in the border counties, dislocated de Montfort's plans by seizing the Severn bridges behind him and then moving down on his rear. Edward not only threw him back across the Usk, but by a raid with three galleys on his ships at Newport, frustrated his new plan of transporting his army back to England. De Montfort was thus forced to undertake a roundabout and exhausing march north through the barren districts of Wales, while Edward fell back to Worcester to hold the Severn against his arrival. Then when de Montfort's son marched to his relief with an army from eastern England, Edward utilised his central position to crush each in turn while separated and "blindfolded," by march and countermarch which exploited mobility to effect a couple of shattering surprises.

Edward as king was to make an even greater contribution to military science in his Welsh wars, not only in developing the use of the bow and the combination of cavalry charges with archery fire, but still more in his strategic method of conquest. The problem was to subdue a hardy and savage mountain race who could evade battle by retiring to the hills and re-occupy the valleys when the invader broke off operations for the winter. If Edward's means were comparatively limited he had an advantage in the fact that the area of the country was also limited. His solution was a combination of mobility and strategic points. By building castles at these points, by connecting them with roads, and by keeping his opponents constantly on the move so that they had no chance to recuperate physically and psychologically or recover geo-

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graphically during the winter, he split up and wore down their power of resistance. As his method was a reflection of the Roman, so it foreshadowed our own on the North-West frontier of India.

Edward's strategic gifts, however, did not survive him, and in the Hundred Years' War there is nothing to learn except negatively from the strategy of his grandson or his great-grandson. Their purposeless parades through France were normally ineffective, and the few which had greater results were the outcome of their greater folly. For in the campaigns of Creçy and Poitiers, Edward III and the Black Prince respectively got themselves into perilous situations. These had the extremely indirect and unintended merit that the very predicament of the English incited their direct-minded opponents to rush headlong into battle under conditions all to their disadvantage and thus give the English the chance to rescue themselves from their predicament. For in a defensive battle on ground chosen by the English the longbow and the futile tactics of French chivalry gave them an assured tactical superiority.

But the severity of these defeats in battle was an advantage to the French. For in the next stage of the war they adhered steadfastly to the Fabian policy of the Constable du Guesclin. The strategy by which he carried out this policy was to avoid battle with the main English army while constantly hampering the movement and contracting the territory of his opponents. Far removed from a passive evasion of battle, his strategy exploited mobility and surprise to a degree that few generals have matched, cutting off convoys, cutting up detachments and capturing isolated garrisons. Always taking the line of

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least expectation, his surprise attacks on such garrisons, often by night, were helped both by his new and rapid storm methods and by his psychologically calculated choice of objectives where the garrisons were discontented or the population ripe for treachery. So also he fanned every flame of local unrest as an immediate distraction of the enemy's attention and an ultimate subtraction from his territory.

Within less than five years he had reduced the vast English possessions in France to a slender strip of territory between Bordeaux and Bayonne. He had done it without fighting a battle. Indeed, he never pressed the attack on even a small English force if it had gained time to take up defensive dispositions. Other generals have maintained, in common with money-lenders, the principle " No advance without security " ; du Guesclin's principle was " No attack without surprise."

The next serious English attempt at foreign conquest was at least inspired by method and by a closer calculation of end and means—after a rash beginning. For Henry V's most famous campaign was his most foolish. In the " Edwardian " parade which culminated at Agincourt the French had only to block Henry's path to ensure his collapse from hunger, but their leaders had forgotten the lesson of Creçy and the teaching of du Guesclin. They thought that with a four to one superiority of force it would be shameful to use this superiority for aught but a direct attack. And so they prepared to provide a more shameful repetition of Creçy and Poitiers. After this escape Henry, however, employed what may be called a " block system " strategy, seeking permanent conquest by methodical extensions of territory, in which the population was

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conciliated as a means to secure his tenure. The interest and value of Henry's later campaigns lie in their grand strategy rather than in their strategy.

In the realm of strategy our survey of the Middle Ages may well close with Edward IV, who in 1461 gained his throne and in 1471 regained it, after being an exile, by his exceptional use of mobility.

In the first campaign the result was mainly due to swiftness of judgment and movement. Edward was engaged against the local Lancastrians in Wales when he got word of the descent of the main Lancastrian army from the north upon London. Turning back, he reached Gloucester on February 20, to hear of the Lancastrian victory at St. Albans on February 17 over the Yorkist force under Warwick. St. Albans to London was 20 miles, Gloucester to London more than 100 miles, and the Lancastrians had three days in hand ! But at Burford on February 22 he was joined by Warwick and heard that the Corporation of London was still arguing the terms of surrender, with its gates shut. Edward left Burford next day, entered London on February 26, and was then proclaimed king, while the discomfited Lancastrians retired to the north. When he followed them up he risked much by attacking a superior enemy in their chosen position at Towton, but the advantage was regained for him by a snowstorm and its exploitation by his subordinate, Fauconberg, who galled the blinded defenders with arrows until they indulged in the fatal relief of a disordered charge.

In 1471 there was more subtlety and no less mobility in Edward's strategy. He had lost his crown, but his brother-in-law lent him fifty thousand. Even so, his

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additional capital only comprised 1200 followers and sundry promissory notes of assistance from his former supporters in England. When he set sail from Flushing, the coasts of England were guarded against him, but, following the line of least expectation, he landed in the Humber on the shrewd calculation that as this district was Lancastrian in sympathy it would be unguarded. Moving swiftly, before the news of his landing could spread and his foes gather, he reached York. Thence he marched down the London Road and neatly swerved past a force blocking it at Tadcaster. Keeping the lead from this force, which turned to pursue him, a threat at the next which awaited him at Newark induced it to retire eastwards, whereupon Edward turned south-west to Leicester, where he gathered in more adherents. He then headed for Coventry, where Warwick, his chief opponent, was assembling his forces. Having drawn both his pursuers also thither, and still further increased his force at the enemy's expense, he turned south-east and marched straight on London, which opened its gates to him. Now feeling strong enough to accept battle, he marched out to greet his long-baffled pursuers on their arrival at Barnet; and a fog-confused battle ended in his favour.

That same day the Lancastrian Queen, Margaret of Anjou, landed at Weymouth with some French mercenaries. Gathering her adherents in the West, she marched to unite with the army which the Earl of Pembroke had raised in Wales. By swiftness again, Edward reached the edge of the Cotswolds while her army was marching north along the Bristol-Gloucester road in the valley below. And then, in a long day's race, one army in the valley, the other on the heights above, he caught hers in the evening at

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Tewkesbury, having prevented it crossing the Severn at Gloucester by sending orders ahead to the Constable to close the gates. Nearly forty miles had been covered since daybreak. That night he camped too close to the Lancastrians for them to escape. Their position was strong defensively, but Edward used his bombards as well as archers to gall them into a charge, and thus gained a decisive advantage in the morning's battle.

Edward's strategy was exceptional in its mobility but typical of the age in its lack of subtlety. For medieval strategy had normally the simple and direct aim of seeking immediate battle. If the result was not indecisive it was usually decisive against those who sought it, unless they could induce the defender to become tactically the aggressor.

The best example of strategy in the Middle Ages comes not from the West but from the East. For the 13th century, distinguished in the West, was made outstanding by the paralysing lesson in strategy taught by the Mongols to European chivalry. In scale and in quality, in surprise and in mobility, in the strategic and in the tactical indirect approach, their campaigns rival if they do not surpass any in history. In Jenghiz Khan's conquest of China we can trace his use of Taitong-Fu to bait successive traps as Bonaparte later utilised the fortress of Mantua. And by far-flung movements and combinations of three armies he finally broke up the moral and military cohesion of the Kin empire. When in 1220 he invaded the Karismian empire, whose centre of power lay in modern Turkestan, one force distracted the enemy's attention to the approach from Kashgar in the south, then the main mass appeared in the north and, screened by its operations, he himself

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with his reserve army swung wider still and, after disappearing into the Kizyl-Kum desert, debouched by surprise at Bokhara in the rear of the enemy's defensive lines and armies.

In 1241 his general, Sabutai, set out to instruct Europe. While one army, as a strategic flankguard, marched through Galicia, engaging the attention of the Polish, German, and Bohemian forces, besides inflicting successive defeats, the main army in three widely separated columns swept through Hungary to the Danube, the two outer columns forming both a shield and a cloak to the later released move of the central column. Then, converging on the Danube near Gran, only to be baulked by the assembly of the Hungarian army on the far bank, the Mongols by a skilfully graduated retirement lured their opponents away from the shelter of the river and the reach of reinforcements.

Finally, by a swift night manoeuvre and surprise on the Sajo river, Sabutai dislocated and annihilated the Hungarian army and became master of the central plains of Europe until he voluntarily relinquished his conquest a year later to the astonished relief of a Europe, which had no power to eject him.[1]

[1] The strategy and tactics of the Mongols have been dealt with in fuller detail in the present author's book "Great Captains Unveiled."

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CHAPTER V

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY— GUSTAVUS, CROMWELL, TURENNE

We come to the first "Great War" of modern history, the Thirty Years' War. Incidentally, those who use this title for the war of 1914-18 are a trifle belated in their historical nomenclature, for even three centuries previously the title was growing threadbare with hard wear.

The Thirty Years' War reveals no campaign that can be called decisive. The nearest to one was the final duel of Gustavus and Wallenstein which, through the former's death in the culminating battle of Lützen, was decisive in quenching the possibility, even likelihood, of a great Protestant confederation under Swedish leadership, and but for the French intervention and Wallenstein's murder, might have been decisive in establishing a united Germany more than three centuries before it was achieved. These partly decisive results and possibilities were certainly indirectly gained, for the final and only pitched battle ended in defeat, if again not a decisive one, for those in whose favour it tilted the scales of the war. Yet if this defeat, partly due to the inferiority of Wallenstein's fighting machine to that of the Swedes, was also partly due to Wallenstein's failure to profit tactically by his strategical opportunity, he undoubtedly had obtained, prior to the battle, a very real advantage. And it is worth while to note that this had come through not one, but three, successive indirect approaches—which, indeed, had

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changed the whole aspect of the war. Called back to command a non-existent army by the abject entreaties of the sovereign who had wronged him, Wallenstein had gathered within three months some 40,000 soldiers of fortune, drawn by the glamour of his name. Despite the urgent appeal for aid from Bavaria, then being overrun by Gustavus's all-conquering army, Wallenstein instead turned north against Gustavus's weaker ally, the Saxons, and after throwing them out of Bohemia, moved on towards Saxony itself. And he even compelled the reluctant Elector of Bavaria to bring his army to join him, thus apparently leaving Bavaria more defenceless than ever. But the reality was otherwise, and Wallenstein's calculation justified, for the threat of losing his junior partner compelled Gustavus to quit Bavaria and hurry to the rescue. Before he could come up, Wallenstein and the Elector had united, and, faced with their combined forces, Gustavus fell back on Nuremburg. Thither Wallenstein followed, but finding the Swedes strongly posted, remarked that " battles enough had been fought already, and it was time to try another method." Instead of pitting his new levies against the long invincible Swedes, he dug himself into a position from which, while his army rested securely, gaining confidence daily, he could command Gustavus's lines of supply with his light horse. He maintained this method and object unswervingly, deaf to all challenges to battle, until the Swedish king, shadowed by the gaunt spectre of famine, attempted a vain assault on Wallenstein's position. The repulse was militarily only an unfortunate incident, but politically its echoes resounded throughout Europe. If it had not dislocated, it had disturbed the moral ascendancy which

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Gustavus's many victories had gained him, and thereby loosened his hold over the German states. Wallenstein combined a realistic grasp of the limitations of his means with a far-seeing calculation of the "grand strategic" end.

From Nuremburg, Gustavus marched south against Bavaria once more—and Wallenstein turned north against Saxony. The master move brought Gustavus to heel as promptly as before, but by superb marching he came up before Wallenstein could intimidate the Saxons into a separate peace. And in the desperate battle of Lützen, which followed, the Swedish army redeemed its strategic set-back by a tactical success; but at the price of its leader's death, and the forfeiture of his project of a great protestant combination under Swedish direction. For 16 years longer the war was to drag out its weary and wasteful length, leaving Germany a desert and yielding to France the predominant place in the polity of Europe.

The outstanding contrast, commonly remarked by historians, between the civil wars, 1642-52, in Great Britain, and the wars of the 17th century on the continent, is that of the decision-compelling spirit which marked the former. The spirit which breathed through this last great conflict in our own country is excellently expressed in the "Memories of a Cavalier"—"we never encamped or entrenched . . . or lay fenced with rivers or defiles. 'Twas the general maxim of the war—where is the enemy? Let us go and fight him."

Yet the first civil war dragged on for four years, without any battle proving clearly decisive, except tactically, and when it ultimately flickered out in 1646, left the Royalist embers still so numerous and so glowing that with the aid

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of discord among the victors the blaze could burst out afresh, two years later, with greater force than ever.

In examining the reasons for this indecisiveness where the spirit of decisiveness was so manifest, we note that the military campaigns took the form of repeated direct advances by one side or the other, interspersed with what in modern language would be called "mopping up" operations, which had but a local and transient effect—at the price of a drain of strength.

At the outset the Royal forces were based on the West and Midlands, the Parliamentary on London. The first Royalist advance on London came to an ignominious end at Turnham Green, often styled the Valmy of the Civil War, a bloodless ending which was the moral sequel to the bloody inconclusiveness of the Battle of Edgehill, fought by the main armies *en route*. Thenceforward Oxford and its surrounding towns became the fortified pivot of the Royalists, and on the edge of this zone the two main armies for long confronted each other ineffectively, while a see-saw struggle between local forces and detachments went on in the west and north. At last, in Sept. 1643, the urgent need of besieged Gloucester compelled the main Parliamentary army under Essex to advance to its relief by a restricted detour past the flank of the Oxford zone. This enabled the Royalists to bar its homeward path, but again a direct clash at Newbury yielded an indecisive result. Natural war-weariness might now have brought the struggle to a negotiated end but for Charles's political blunder in making a truce with the Irish rebels which, by its appearance of bringing Catholic Irish to subdue Protestant England, brought instead the greater counter-weight of Presbyterian Scotland into the scales

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against the Royal cause. With a Scottish army advancing to engage the northern Royalists, the Parliament now again concentrated their strength for a direct advance on the Oxford zone, an advance which brought no greater result than the occupation of a few outlying fortresses. The king, indeed, was even able to detach Rupert for a swift concentration with the northern Royalists against the Scots. Unhappily for him, tactical defeat at Marston Moor more than undid the effect of this strategic opportunity. But the victors profited little. Once more the ineffectiveness of the direct and main move on Oxford produced loss of heart and desertion, and but for the inflexible purpose of men like Cromwell, might have led to a peace of war-weariness. Fortunately for the Parliament, the Royal cause was crumbling still worse internally, far more than from external blows. Thus it was a morally and numerically inferior foe, only preserved so long by faulty Parliamentary strategy, that Fairfax and Cromwell, with the new model army, overthrew at Naseby in 1645. Yet even this tactically decisive victory did not prevent the war continuing for another year.

It is a different picture when we come to the second Civil War, with Cromwell as the ruling genius. Instead of advancing into Scotland, or even first attempting to meet the invading Scottish army, Cromwell and Fairfax moved swiftly to crush the various outbreaks in England, while Lambert was left to delay the Scots, falling back slowly before them. Cromwell's order of "treatment" here deserves a note in view of the doctrine that while and if the main enemy is overthrown, the lesser foes may safely be left to fall of themselves. For one finds, with surprise, that it is as hard to find historical justification for this

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doctrine, logically sound, as it is easy to find successful examples of the reverse order.

At last, on the fall of Pembroke, July 11, 1648, Cromwell was able to move north. But instead of advancing direct to meet the Scots who were coming down the west coast route, he marched in a sweeping curve by Nottingham and Doncaster, then north-westward to join Lambert at Otley on the flank of the Scottish army—strung out between Wigan and Preston, with a corps of 3,500 under Langdale, covering the left flank. Cromwell had only 8,600 men, including Lambert's horse and the Yorkshire militia, against some 20,000 of the enemy. But his descent on the tail of the Scottish column at Preston dislocated its balance, and caused it to turn and meet him in successive fractions. On Preston Moor Langdale's corps was overthrown, and then, pressing the pursuit fiercely, Cromwell rolled up the Scottish column, driving it through Wigan to Uttoxeter and Ashbourne, where, now checked in front by the midland militia and pressed in rear by Cromwell's cavalry, it surrendered, Aug. 25. This victory was decisive; not only did it crush the foes of the Parliament, but it enabled the army to "purge" the Parliament, and to bring the king to trial and execution.

The subsequent invasion of Scotland is really a separate war, waged by the now established new authority, to nip in the bud the plan of the king's son, Charles II, to regain the lost throne by Scottish aid. Thus it hardly comes in the category of campaigns which have decisively affected the course of history. At the same time it furnishes remarkable evidence of how strongly Cromwell was imbued with the strategy of indirect approach. When he

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found the Scottish army under Leslie in position across his path to Edinburgh, a mere contact-making engagement satisfied him of the strength of Leslie's situation, and although within sight of his goal, he had such self-restraint as to lead him to fall back to Musselburgh. Even when Leslie moved forward to meet him, Cromwell refused battle, and, instead, issued three days' rations as a preliminary to a wide manoeuvre through the hills on Edinburgh and the enemy's rear. And when Leslie succeeded in moving across to bar him directly at Corstorphine Hill (Aug. 21, 1650) Cromwell, though now far from his base, sought yet another approach by a manoeuvre to his right, only to be blocked afresh by Leslie at Gogar (Aug. 22). Most men would have gambled on a direct battle. But not Cromwell. Cutting his loss—in sick, due to exposure and fatigue—he fell back on Musselburgh and thence to Dunbar, drawing Leslie after him. Neither, however, would he embark his army, as sundry of his officers urged, but waited at Dunbar until his opponents had moved down (Sept. 2) to place themselves on Cromwell's line of retreat to Berwick—thus, incidentally, placing Cromwell on theirs! Next morning a tactical indirect approach surprised and rolled up an enemy twice his strength, sealing with triumph a campaign in which Cromwell had refused all temptation, even to the apparent hazard of his fortunes, to abandon his strategy of indirect approach.

Dunbar gave Cromwell control of southern Scotland, and practically wiped the army of the kirk, and the Covenanters as a political factor, off the balance-sheet of the war. On the contra account only the pure Royalist element of the Highlands was left. The process of

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settlement was delayed by Cromwell's grave illness, and meantime Leslie had breathing space to organise and train the new Royalist army beyond the Forth.

When, late in June, 1651, Cromwell was fit enough to resume operations, he was faced with a difficult problem. And his solution for subtlety and masterly calculation compares favourably with any strategic combination in the history of war. Although now, for the first time, the superiority was on his side, he was faced by a canny adversary established in a region of marsh and moorland, which afforded every natural advantage to the weaker side in barring the approach to Stirling. Unless Cromwell could overthrow the resistance within a brief span he would be doomed to spend another trying winter in Scotland, with inevitable suffering to his troops and the likelihood of increasing difficulties at home. And to dislodge the enemy would not suffice, for a partial success would only disperse the enemy into the Highlands, where they would remain a thorn in his side. Let us watch the unfolding of Cromwell's plan. First he menaces Leslie in front, storming Callender House, near Falkirk. Then he passes, in stages, his whole army across the Firth of Forth and marches on Perth, thereby not only turning Leslie's defensive barrier across the direct approach to Stirling, but gaining possession of the key to Leslie's supply area. By this manoeuvre he had, however, uncovered the route to England. Here lies the supreme artistry of Cromwell's plan. He was on the open rear of an enemy now threatened with hunger and desertion—and he left one bolt-hole open. As one of them said, "We must either starve, disband, or go with a handful of men into England. This last seems to be the least ill, yet it seems very desperate."

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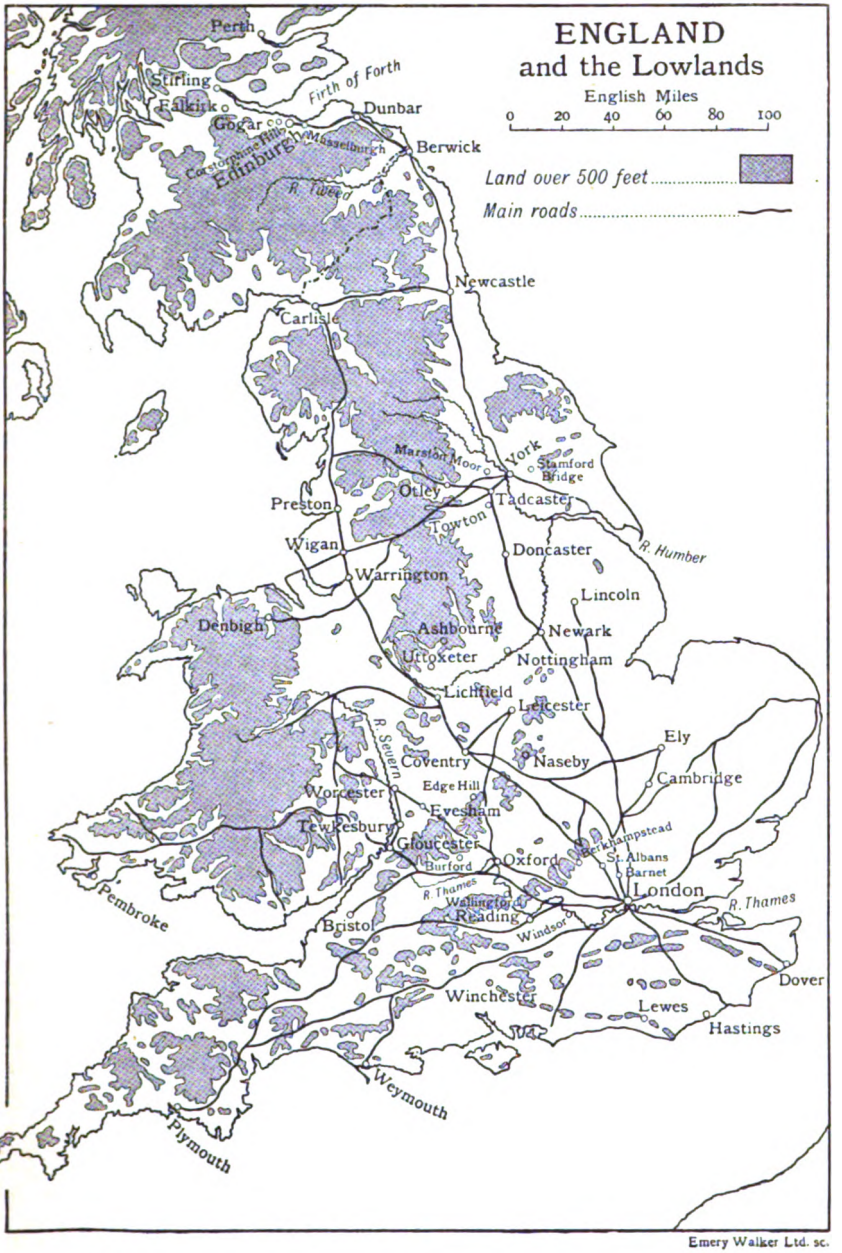

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They naturally chose it, and on July 31 started on the march south to England. Cromwell, foreseeing this, had prepared their reception with the aid of the authorities at Westminster. The militia was called out promptly, all suspected Royalists were under surveillance, hidden stores of arms were seized. Once more the Scots moved down the west coast route. Cromwell despatched Lambert's cavalry to follow them, while Harrison moved obliquely across from Newcastle to Warrington, and Fleetwood moved north with the midland militia. Lambert slipped round the flank of the enemy and, after joining Harrison on Aug. 13, the two now opposed an elastic delaying resistance to the oncoming invader. Cromwell meantime was marching, 20 miles a day in August heat, down the east coast route and then south-westwards. Thus four forces were converging on the trapped invader. Even Charles's turn away from the route for London towards the Severn valley did but delay a few days, and failed to disturb the closing of the jaws. And on Sept. 3, the anniversary of Dunbar, the battlefield of Worcester yielded Cromwell's " crowning mercy."

The interminable series of wars between the close of the Thirty Years' War and the opening of the war of the Spanish Succession, in which the armies of Louis XIV faced collectively, or in turn, most of the other armies of Europe, are distinguished, or rather undistinguished, by their indecisiveness. Objects were often limited, and objectives followed suit. But two more profound causes of this indecisiveness were, first, that the development of fortification had outpaced that of weapons and given the defensive a preponderance such as was restored to it in the twentieth century by the development of the machine-

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gun; second, that armies were not yet organised in permanently self-contained fractions, but usually moved and fought as a single "piece," a condition which limited their power of "distraction"—of deceiving the opponent and of cramping his freedom of movement. In the whole course of the successive wars known as the Fronde, Devolution, Dutch and Grand Alliance, only one campaign stands out as decisive, even in its sphere. This is Turenne's winter campaign of 1674-75, crowned by the victory of Türkheim. It was a critical time for France. Louis' allies had left him one by one, and Spaniards, Dutch, Danes, Austrians, and most of the German princes had joined the hostile coalition. Turenne had been forced to retire over the Rhine, after laying waste the Palatinate, and the Elector of Brandenburg was converging to unite with the imperial army under Bournonville. After inflicting a check at Enzheim, Oct. 1674, on Bournonville, before the Elector came up, Turenne had to retire to Dettweiler, while the Germans spread into Alsace and took up winter quarters in the towns between Strasbourg and Belfort. The stage was set for Turenne's finest masterpiece. The initial surprise was that of deciding upon a mid-winter campaign. To deceive the enemy he placed the fortresses of middle Alsace in a state of defence. Then he withdrew the whole field army quietly into Lorraine. Next he marched swiftly southward behind the screening heights of the Vosges, gathering on his way such reinforcements as were available. In the last stages of the move he even split his forces into numerous small bodies in order to mislead the enemy's spies. After a severe march through hilly country and through snowstorms, he reunited his army near Belfort, and without any

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pause, poured into Alsace from the south—having left it from the north. Bournonville, with such force as he had near, tried to stop him at Mülhausen (Dec. 29), but was swept away. Thence the French torrent rushed on up the trough between the Vosges and the Rhine, driving the scattered Imperialists north towards Strasbourg, and cutting off each body which tried to resist. At Colmar, halfway to Strasbourg, the Elector, now in command of the Germans, had established a final dam, buttressed by a force equal to Turenne's. But the momentum, both physical and moral, was with Turenne, and was skilfully maintained by a tactical indirect approach on the battle-field of Türkheim. Here Turenne sought less to destroy the opposing army than to "liquidate" the hardening resistance, leaving natural consequences to complete the enemy's dissolution. He succeeded so well that a few days later he was able to report that not a soldier of the enemy was left in Alsace. The French then recuperated in winter quarters at Strasbourg, drawing supplies freely from the German bank of the Rhine, and even as far as the Neckar. The Elector had retired, with what remained of his forces, to Brandenburg, and Turenne's old rival, Montecuculi, was called back in the spring to command the Imperial resistance. He, too, was manoeuvred into a position where Turenne had him at a disadvantage, on the Sasbach; but at the outset of the action Turenne was killed by a cannon-shot, and with his fall the balance of the war changed again.

Why is the decisiveness of this winter campaign of Turenne's in such startling contrast with the rest of the campaigns of the 17th century in Europe? It was an age when generals, however limited their horizon, were at

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least supremely skilful in manoeuvre. But in this art they were so well matched that even flank moves which in other ages might have succeeded, were adroitly parried, and a real dislocation of the opponent's " system " was but once achieved. Turenne is famous as the one great captain who improved continuously with age, and there is surely a special significance in the fact that, and the manner in which, after commanding in more campaigns than any other general in all history, he reached in his last a solution of the problem of achieving a decision in 17th century warfare. For he did it without departing from the " golden " rule of those times—that highly trained soldiers were too costly to be squandered.

Clearly, from his experience that under those conditions a decisive result could only be gained by a strategical plan in which the approach was radically more indirect than any yet conceived. Thus at a time when all manoeuvres were based on fortress pivots, which formed the protected supply depots for the maintenance of the field armies, he cut loose from this base of operations and sought, in surprise and mobility, not only a decision but his security. It was a just calculation, not a gamble, for the dislocation, mental, moral, and logistical, created among the enemy, afforded him throughout an ample margin of security.

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CHAPTER VI

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—MARLBOROUGH AND FREDERICK

THE War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13) is the second general European or "Great War" of modern history. It is curious how these have recurred at intervals of a century. The early part of the 17th century saw the beginning of the Thirty Years' War; the early 18th century the War of the Spanish Succession; at the end of that century the French Revolution set Europe ablaze, but it was in the first two decades of the 19th that the menace of Napoleon brought the struggle to its height; and in the second decade of the 20th century came the most intense hitherto of all these "Great Wars."

The War of the Spanish Succession is remarkable for its curiously dual nature. In policy it was both an extreme case of "war with a limited aim" and a decisive struggle to enforce or break the predominant power of France under Louis XIV. In strategy it mainly comprised a futile series of direct approaches or scarcely more purposeful indirect moves, yet was punctuated by a number of brilliant indirect approaches, mainly associated with the illustrious name of Marlborough. The significant interest of these lies in the way that they mark the several turning points of the war.

The coalition against France comprised Austria, Great Britain, several of the German states, Holland, Denmark and Portugal, while Louis XIV's main support came from

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Spain, Bavaria and, at the outset, Savoy. It was in northern Italy that the war opened, while the other armies were preparing. The Austrians under Eugene assembled in Tyrol, and Eugene made ostentatious preparations for a direct advance, whereupon the opposing army, under Catinat, placed itself to block his path at the Rivoli defile. But Eugene, having secretly reconnoitred a difficult passage through the mountains long unused by troops, came down to the plains by a wide circuit to the east. Pressing his advantage by subsequent manoeuvres which repeatedly distracted his opponents as to his intentions, he finally drew them into a disastrous attack upon him at Chiari, and established his position firmly in northern Italy. The result of this indirect approach was not only to give the allies generally a valuable moral tonic at the outset of their struggle with the "invincible" armies of the *Grand Monarque*, but to deal a blow to the French and Spanish power in Italy from which it did not recover. One important sequel was that the Duke of Savoy, the inborn adherent of the stronger party, changed side.

In 1702 the main struggle began. The largest French army was assembled in Flanders, where the French had fortified the 70 miles long "lines of Brabant" from Antwerp to Huy, near Liège, to secure the rear of their proposed advance. At the threat of invasion the only idea of the Dutch was to sit tight within their fortresses, but Marlborough had a different conception of war. He did not merely exchange this passive defensive for a direct offensive against the French army, under Boufflers, then marching towards the Rhine. Instead, uncovering the precious fortresses, he moved swiftly towards the "lines of Brabant" and Boufflers' line of retreat. The latter, at

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once feeling the pull of this moral "lassoo," hurried back. Physically tired and morally dislocated, the French army would have been an easy victim for Marlborough, who was waiting ready to embrace it, but the Dutch deputies, timidly content to see the invasion called off, forbade the consummation by battle. Twice more that year Boufflers was drawn into a trap by Marlborough, and each time the Dutch saved him. Next year Marlborough planned a subtle manoeuvre to gain possession of Antwerp and thereby break the fortified breakwater. He enticed the French army eastwards, slipped it, and raced westwards to Antwerp—only to find that the Dutch generals had neglected to concentrate at the proper time—and so nullified the whole design. In disgust Marlborough resigned himself to the war of petty sieges beloved of the Dutch. In 1704, however, he produced his grandest indirect approach.

Of the enemy armies, one, now under Villeroy, was in Flanders, one under Tallard on the upper Rhine between Mannheim and Strasbourg, with smaller linking forces, and a combined army of Bavarians and French, under the Elector of Bavaria and Marsin, near Ulm and the Danube. This was pushing menacingly forward from Bavaria towards Vienna. Marlborough planned to switch the English part of his army, leaving the Dutch behind, from the Meuse to the Danube, then to strike decisively at the Bavarians, the junior partner of the enemy firm. This long-range move to a point so far from his base, and from the direct interests which he was shielding in the north, was audacious by any standard, but much more by that of the cautious strategy of his time. Its security lay in the dislocating effect of its surprise. When he moved south

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down the Rhine it appeared that he was aiming at the French forces in that theatre, and by making visible preparations to bridge the Rhine at Philipsburg, he reinforced this natural delusion. But on reaching Mannheim, whence his obvious direction was south-west, he turned south-east, vanished up the valley of the Neckar, and thence across the base of the Rhine-Danube triangle towards Ulm. Joining the margrave of Baden and Eugene, he moved on with the forces of the first, while the latter went back to detain, or at least to delay, the French armies on the Rhine—whither Villeroy had belatedly followed Marlborough from Flanders.

But although Marlborough had placed himself on the rear of the Franco-Bavarian army in relation to France, he was still on their front in relation to Bavaria. This geographical juxtaposition combined with the conditions of the age to hinder the exploitation of his strategic advantage. Of these conditions, one was the rigidity of the tactical organisation of armies, which made difficult the completion of a strategic manoeuvre. A general could draw the enemy to "water," but could not make him drink—could not make him accept battle against his inclination. Another condition was that Marlborough had to share the command on alternate days with the cautious margrave of Baden.

The enemy was posted in a strong position at Ulm on the Danube. Marlborough at first sought to find an unguarded passage further east in order to get on their rear, but rather than risk more delay through the margrave's caution, chose his own day of command for a successful, if expensive, assault on the enemy detachment covering the Donauwörth crossing. Their main army,

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however, withdrew safely to Augsburg. Marlborough then devastated the countryside as a lever to force the Elector of Bavaria to terms or to accept battle at a disadvantage. This purpose was nullified by another condition of the time—that war being the affair of rulers rather than of their peoples, the Elector was slow to be affected by inconveniences at second hand. Thus Tallard had time to come up from the Rhine, but his arrival was offset by that of Eugene, who took the bold course of slipping away from before Villeroy in order to join Marlborough. Marlborough and Eugene then moved unexpectedly on the combined army of Tallard, Marsin, and the Elector, and, although the surprise was not complete, caught them at Blenheim so awkwardly disposed as to give Marlborough the opportunity to effect a tactical dislocation. Apart from the dispersal of two French armies, and the shattered "invincibility" of their arms, their junior partner, Bavaria, was struck off the board as a result of the victory.

Marlborough then returned to Flanders, whereupon the French army there withdrew behind its new "lines of the Geete"—from Antwerp to Namur. Again in 1705 he drew the French army off in a wrong direction and, doubling back, broke through a weak sector, only to be baulked of victory by his Dutch clogs. In the next year's campaign Marlborough conceived a still more indirect approach—to join Eugene in Italy, but Dutch timidity tied him fast to Flanders. However, Villeroy's sudden fit of boldness in venturing out of his fortified lines enabled Marlborough, who would not wait for his allied contingents, to intercept him before he could reach the shelter of the Meuse fortresses. At Ramillies a brilliant tactical

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indirect approach yielded him victory which he exploited by a pursuit so effective that all Flanders and Brabant fell into his hands. The same year the war in Italy was virtually ended by another example of the indirect approach. At the outset Eugene had been forced back as far east as Lake Garda and then into the mountains, while his ally, the duke of Savoy, was besieged in Turin. Instead of trying to fight his way forward, Eugene out-manoeuvred and slipped his opponents, cut himself adrift from his base, pressed on through Lombardy into Piedmont and at Turin inflicted a decisive defeat on the numerically superior but mentally dislocated enemy.

The tide of war had now ebbed to the French frontiers, both north and south. But in 1707 disunity of purpose among the allies gave her time to rally, and the next year she concentrated her main forces against Marlborough. Tied by the leg to Flanders, and heavily outnumbered, he and Eugene reversed the Danube move by switching Eugene's army from the Rhine to join Marlborough. But the French were now under the able Vendôme, and they advanced before Eugene could arrive. Having induced Marlborough to fall back to Louvain by this direct menace, Vendôme scored the first trick by suddenly turning westwards, thereby regaining Ghent, Bruges, and practically all Flanders west of the Scheldt without cost. But instead of marching to oppose him directly, Marlborough hazardously thrust south-westwards, to interpose between him and the French frontier. At Oudenarde, the initial advantage gained by a strategic dislocation was pressed home by a tactical dislocation.

Could Marlborough but have carried out his own wish for a prompt move on Paris the war might have been

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ended. Even as it was, Louis was driven to seek peace that winter, offering terms that amply met the allies' objects, but they rejected the substance for the shadow of his complete humiliation. Thus the war had a fresh lease of life in 1709. Marlborough's project was for an indirect military approach to a key political objective—his idea being to slip past the enemy's forces, mask their fortresses and aim at Paris. But this was too bold even for Eugene's stomach. Thus it was modified to a plan which avoided a direct attack on the entrenched " lines " covering the frontier between Douai and Bethune, but instead aimed to secure the flanking fortresses of Tournai and Mons as a preliminary to an advance into France down a route east of the fortified zone. Once again Marlborough's genius succeeded in deceiving his opponents. His menace of a direct attack on the lines led them to draw off most of the garrison of Tournai to reinforce them, whereupon Marlborough doubled back and closed upon Tournai. But nevertheless it resisted so stubbornly as to cost him two months' delay. However, a fresh threat to the " lines of La Bassée " enabled him to pounce upon Mons and invest it unchecked. But the French moved across rapidly enough to block his onward path and the further development of his design. He now, for the first time, committed himself to a direct approach, less wise than Cromwell before Dunbar, and although the assault on the well-entrenched and prepared enemy holding the Malplaquet " gateway " ended in a victory, it was at such a disproportionate cost that as Villars, the defeated commander, wrote to Louis " If God gives us another defeat like this, your Majesty's enemies will be destroyed." His verdict had prophetic truth, for the

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victory of Malplaquet proved to have cost the allies their hopes of victory in the war.

In 1710 stalemate reigned, with Marlborough caged behind the bars of the *Ne Plus Ultra* lines, which the French had constructed from Valenciennes to the sea, and his political enemies given fresh leverage to loosen his position at home. Fortune, too, turned against those who had forfeited her favours, for in 1711 Eugene's army was called away by the political situation, and Marlborough was left to face a greatly superior foe. Too weak to attempt or achieve any decisive operation, he could at least assert his own mastery by exploding the French boast in naming their lines *Ne Plus Ultra*. This he did by the most uncannily indirect of all his approaches—deceiving, distracting, doubling successively, until he was able to slip through the lines without firing a shot. But two months later he was recalled home to meet disgrace and in 1712 England left her allies to fight alone. Austrians and Dutch, now under Eugene, still held their own for a time, and both sides were growing equally exhausted. But in 1712 Villars produced a compound manoeuvre that for deceptiveness, secrecy and rapidity was worthy of Marlborough, and in consequence gained a cheap and decisive victory over the allies at Denain. This completed the disintegration of the coalition, and Louis was able to gain a peace very different from what would have been his lot before Malplaquet. One direct approach had undone the aggregate advantage which indirect approaches alone had built up, and it is not the least significant feature that the issue was finally settled, in the reverse way, by yet another example of the indirect approach.

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Although the allies had forfeited their primary object of preventing Louis XIV's practical union of France and Spain, England came out of the war with a territorial profit. This was due to Marlborough's vision stretching beyond the narrow limits of his own theatres of operations. As a military distraction and a political asset, he had combined long-range operations in the Mediterranean with his own in Flanders. The expeditions of 1702 and 1703 helped to subtract Portugal and Savoy from the enemy balance and paved the way for a move against the greater "prop," Spain. The next, in 1704, gained Gibraltar. Then Peterborough in Spain ably fulfilled a distracting rôle, and in 1708 another expedition took Minorca. If later operations in Spain were mishandled and less fortunate in result, England came out of the war in possession of Gibraltar and Minorca, two keys to the command of the Mediterranean, as well as Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in the North Atlantic.

The indecisive results of the war of the Austrian Succession, 1740-48, cannot be better illustrated than in the fact that the most militarily successful nation—the French—merely gleaned from it the phrase "you are as stupid as the Peace" to hurl at fellow-citizens who were objects of dislike. Frederick the Great was the one ruler to profit, or profiteer. He gained Silesia early and then retired from the competition, and although he came in again later, risked much without gaining more, except the right to embroider some illustrious victories on his colours. The war, however and moreover, established the prestige of Prussia as a great power. The events which decided the cession of Silesia to Prussia, by the early peace of Breslau in 1742, deserve notice. For at the opening of

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that year the prospect seemed rather to be fading. A combined advance by the French and Prussians upon the Austrian main army had been arranged. But the French were soon brought to a standstill. Then Frederick, instead of continuing westwards to unite with his ally, suddenly turned southwards towards Vienna. Although his advanced troops appeared before the enemy capital, he quickly fell back, with the enemy army marching to cut him off from his base. This advance of Frederick's has usually been denounced as a mere and rash demonstration, yet in view of its sequel the charge may perhaps be harsh. For his rapid retreat, an apparent *sauve qui peut*, drew the Austrians in pursuit of him far on into Silesia where, turning at bay, he inflicted a sharp reverse, exploiting it by a vigorous pursuit. Only three weeks later Austria made a separate peace with Frederick, by which Silesia was ceded. It may be unwise to draw strong deductions from this event, yet it is at least curious that this sudden disposition to a peace of sacrifice should have followed the one indirect approach of the war in this theatre, even though it comprised but a mere appearance before Vienna and a small tactical victory, wrested apparently from the jaws of defeat as well as far less spectacular than many of Frederick's other victories.

If the war of the Austrian Succession was indecisive in its general results, the other and succeeding major war of the mid-18th century was no better—from the standpoint of European polity. The one country that achieved results that decisively affected the course of European history was England. And England was not only an indirect participant in the Seven Years' War (1756-63), but made her contribution and took her profits indirectly.

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For while the armies of Europe were exhausting themselves and their states in direct action, small detachments from England were turning this weakness to advantage by acquiring the British Empire. Moreover, the fact that Prussia, when on the verge of exhaustion, obtained a peace of indecision instead of humiliation, was as much due to the indirect dislocation of the offensive power of France through her colonial disasters, as it was to the dislocation of Russia's intended *coup de grâce* to Prussia through the death of the Tsaritsa. For Frederick the Great's long string of brilliant victories in battle had but succeeded in leaving him almost stripped of resources and incapable of further resistance by 1762.

Thus only one campaign between European forces in this long series can be termed truly decisive either in its military or political results—Quebec. And that was not only the briefest, but waged in a secondary theatre. As the capture of Quebec and the overthrow of the French dominion in Canada was made possible by the capacity for grand strategic indirect approach contained in sea-power, so the actual military course of the campaign was decided by a strategic indirect approach. The lesson, moreover, is the more emphatic because this apparently hazardous indirect approach was only undertaken after the direct approach on the line of the Montmorency had failed with serious loss of lives and still more of morale. In justice to Wolfe it must be pointed out that he only resigned himself to this direct approach after various baits—the bombardment of Quebec and the exposure of isolated detachments at Point Lévis and near the Montmorency Falls—had failed to lure the French from their strong position. But in the failure of these, compared with

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the success of his final hazardous landing on the French rear above Quebec, there is a lesson. To *lure* the enemy out was not enough; it was necessary to *draw* him out. So also in the failure of the feints by which Wolfe tried to prepare his direct approach. To *mystify* the enemy was not enough; he must be distracted—which implies a combination of deception of the enemy's mind, deprivation of his freedom to move for counter-action, and the distension of his forces. Gambler's last throw as Wolfe's ultimate move seemed on the surface, all these conditions were fulfilled—and the result was victory. Even so, to those who habitually study military history in terms of armed force, the degree of dislocation caused in the French forces does not seem to warrant the measure of their collapse, and numerous theses have been written to show what they might have done and how they might well have repaired their situation. But Quebec is an illuminating example of the truth that a decision is produced even more by the mental and moral dislocation of one command than by the physical dislocation of its forces. And these effects transcend the geographical and statistical calculations which fill nine-tenths of a normal work on military history.

But if, as history shows, the main European channel of the Seven Years' War was so indeterminate in its course, despite so many tactical victories, it is worth while to enquire into the cause. If the number of Frederick's foes is the usual explanation, the sum of his advantages is a counterbalance so strong as to make the explanation not altogether adequate. We need to probe deeper.

For like Alexander and Napoleon, and unlike Marlborough, he was free from the responsibility and limitations which are imposed on a strategist in the strict

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sense of the word. He combined in his person the functions of strategy and grand strategy. Moreover, the permanent association between him as king and his army enabled him to prepare and develop his means for the end which he chose. The comparative scarcity of fortresses in his theatres of war was another advantage.

Although faced by the coalition of Austria, France, Russia, Sweden and Saxony, with England as his only ally, Frederick had at the outset and until midway through the second campaign a superiority in the actual forces available. In addition he had the two great assets of a tactical instrument superior to any of his enemies, and of a central position. This enabled him to practise what is commonly called the strategy of "interior lines," striking outwards from his central pivot against one of the forces on the circumference, and utilising the shorter distance he had thus to travel to concentrate against one of the enemy forces before it could be supported by the others. Ostensibly, it would seem that the further apart these enemy forces, the easier it must be to achieve a decisive success. In terms of time, space and number this is undoubtedly true. But once more the moral element intrudes. When the enemy forces are widely separated each is self-contained and tends to be consolidated by pressure. When they are close together they tend to coalesce and "become members one of another," mutually dependent in mind, morale, and matter. The minds of the commanders affect each other, moral impressions are quickly transfused, and even the movements of each force easily hinder or disorganise those of the others. Thus if the antagonist has less time and space for his action, the dislocating results of it take effect more quickly and easily.

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Further, when forces are close together the enemy's mere divergence from his approach to one of them may become an unexpected, and therefore truly indirect approach to another. In contrast, when forces are widely separated there is more time to prepare to meet, or avoid, the second blow of the army which is exploiting its central position.

The use of " interior lines " as Marlborough used them in his march to the Danube is a form of the indirect approach. But although it is an indirect approach in relation to the enemy forces as a whole, it is not so in relation to the force that is the actual target, unless this is taken unaware. Otherwise it needs to be completed by a further indirect approach—to the objective itself.

Frederick consistently used his central position to concentrate against one fraction of the enemy. And he always employed tactics of indirect approach. Thereby he gained many victories. But his tactical indirect approach was geometrical rather than psychological—unprepared by the subtler forms of surprise favoured by Scipio—and for all their executive skill, these manoeuvres were narrow. The opponent might be unable to meet the following blow, owing to the rigidity of his mind or his formations, but the blow itself did not fall unexpected by him.

At Prague the approach began in an indirect way, but became direct before the manoeuvre was complete, and only the arrival, unexpected by the Austrians, of Zeiten's cavalry, sent on a wide detour, turned the scales. At Kolin the manoeuvre was so narrow that Frederick's troops, galled by fire, were drawn off their course into a direct attack which failed disastrously. At Rossbach the French and their allies, twice Frederick's strength, tried

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to copy Frederick's manoeuvre and turn it against him. Not only did the narrowness of the manoeuvre give him ample warning, but their hasty assumption that he was retreating in time led them to " distract " their own forces in order to catch him up, so that when he counter-manoeuvred, not to face them, but to fall on their far flank, they were almost instantaneously dislocated. Thus here Frederick achieved a real indirect approach of surprise, not merely of mobility. And this was by far the most economical of all his victories, for at the price of only 500 casualties he inflicted 7,700 and dispersed an army of 64,000. Unhappily he had drained his strength too low in the previous battles to reap the full benefit. Now he had still to deal with the Austrian army that he had failed to settle with at Prague and Kolin, and although he succeeded at Leuthen, the victory there won by a brilliant if obvious indirect approach cost him more than he could afford. Thus the war and Frederick's use of " interior lines " continued, with the prospect dimmer, in 1758. He began by a real indirect approach, marching right across the Austrian front and past their flank to Olmütz, 20 miles into enemy territory. Even when he lost an important convoy of supplies, he did not fall back, but instead, continued through Bohemia right round the Austrian rear and into their entrenched base at Königgrätz. But he had now once more to pay forfeit for the opportunities lost at Prague and Kolin, for the Russian " steam-roller " had at last got up steam and had rolled forward to Posen, on the road to Berlin. Frederick decided that he must forgo the completion of his Bohemian campaign and march north to stop the Russians. He succeeded, but Zorndorf was another Prague, with

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Seydlitz's cavalry playing the guardian angel indirect rôle of Zeiten. So with his human capital still more reduced he had to leave the Russians to recuperate and move back against the Austrians—to suffer at Höchkirch, not only a further reduction but a defeat, through undue confidence that his old Austrian opponent, Daun, would never take the initiative. Thus Frederick was surprised in a double sense, and, surrounded by night, was only saved from destruction through Zeiten's cavalry keeping a passage open for his retreat. So on the war went in 1759, with Frederick sinking lower. At Kunersdorf he suffered the worst defeat of his career from the Russians, at Maxen another from Daun—again due to misplaced confidence—and henceforth he could do no more than passively block the enemy. But while Prussia was sinking into twilight the sun was shining at Quebec, and Wolfe's victory encouraged and helped England to send troops directly to Germany, and at Minden these compensated by a victory over the French Frederick's own disasters. Nevertheless his weakness was more marked than ever in 1760. He gained a respite from the pressure in the east by the ruse of letting the Russians capture a despatch worded "Austrians totally defeated to-day, now for the Russians. Do what we agreed upon." But although the Russians promptly acted upon this gentle hint, and retired, the "posthumous" defeat of the Austrians at Torgau subsequently was another Pyrrhic victory for Frederick. Paralysed by his own losses, with only 60,000 men left in all, he could not venture another battle and was even shut up in Silesia, cut off from Prussia. Fortunately, the Austrian army's strategy was as nerveless as ever, and the Russian army's rear services broke down with the consistency that has

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always marked them. And at this lingering crisis the Tsaritsa died, and her successor not only made peace, but began to contemplate aiding Frederick. For a few months France and Austria continued a desultory war, but the former's strength was undermined by her colonial disasters, and with Austria now not only inert but weary, peace was soon arranged, leaving all the warring countries exhausted, and none, except England, better off for the seven years' exuberant bloodshed.

If many lessons are to be culled from Frederick's campaigns, the main one would appear to be, in a sentence, that "His indirectness was too direct." Or, to express it in another way, that he regarded the indirect approach as a matter of pure mobility, instead of a combination of mobility and surprise. Thus, despite all his brilliance, his economy of force broke down.

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CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

THIRTY years pass and the curtain rises on "The Great War" that was illumined by the genius of Napoleon Bonaparte. As a century before, France was the menace against which the powers of Europe banded themselves. But this time the course of the struggle was different. Revolutionary France might have many sympathisers, but they did not form the governments of the nations, nor did they control the armed forces of their states. Yet, beginning the war alone, forcibly isolated as an infectious germ-carrier, she not only repulsed the combined effort to smother her, but, changing her form, became an expanding military menace to the rest of Europe, and ultimately the military master of most of it. The clue to the achievement lies partly in natural, partly in personal conditions. The former sprang from the national and revolutionary spirit which inspired the citizen armies of France, and in compensation for the precise drill which it made impossible, gave rein instead to the tactical sense and initiative of the individual. These new tactics of fluidity had for their simple, yet vital pivot, the fact that the French now marched and fought at a quick step of 120 paces to the minute, while their opponents adhered to the orthodox 70 paces. This elementary difference, in days before mechanical science endowed armies with means of movement swifter than the human leg, made

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possible the rapid transference and " reshuffled " concentrations of striking power whereby the French could in Napoleon's phrase, multiply " mass by velocity " both strategically and tactically.

A second natural condition was the organisation of the army into permanent divisions—the fractioning of the army into self-contained and separately acting parts. Initiated by de Broglie, the reform had taken effect even before the Revolution. But then Carnot initiated and Bonaparte developed the idea that these divisions while operating separately should co-operate to a common goal.

A third condition, linked with this, was that the chaotic supply system and the undisciplined nature of the Revolutionary armies compelled a reversion to the old practice of " living on the country." And the distribution of the army in divisions meant that this practice detracted less from the army's effectiveness than in old days. Where, formerly, the fractions had to be collected before they could carry out an operation, now they could be serving a military purpose while feeding themselves.

Moreover, the effect of " moving light " was to accelerate their mobility, and to enable them to move freely in mountainous or forest country. Similarly, the very fact that they were unable to depend on magazines and supply trains for food and equipment lent impetus to hungry and ill-clad troops in descending upon the rear of an enemy who had, and depended on, such direct forms of supply.

The personal conditions centred round the genius of a leader—Napoleon Bonaparte—whose mental ability was nourished by intense study of and reflection upon military history. Thus fortified he was able to exploit the full possibilities of the new " divisional " system. In devel-

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oping the wider range of strategic combinations thus possible lay Napoleon's chief contribution to strategy.

The amazement caused by the discomfiture at Valmy and Jemappes of the first partial invasion of 1792 has tended to obscure the fact that France and the Revolution were in far greater danger subsequently. For it was only after the execution of Louis XVI that the First Coalition was formed—by England, Holland, Austria, Prussia, Spain and Sardinia—and only then that determination of spirit and resources of men and material were thrown into the scales. And if the conduct of the war by the invaders lacked purposeful and skilful direction, the situation of the French grew more and more precarious until fortune changed dramatically in 1794 and the tide of invasion flowed back. Henceforth from being the resisting party France became the aggressor. What caused this ebb? Certainly no strategic master-stroke, yet for all its vague and limited aim the significance of the event is that the decision sprang from a strategic approach that was definitely indirect. While the main armies were pitting themselves against each other near Lille, with much bloodshed but no finality, Jourdan's far distant Army of the Moselle was ordered to assemble a striking force on its left, and, advancing westwards through the Ardennes, to operate towards Liège and Namur. Reaching Namur after a hungry march, during which his troops had lived on such supplies as they could pick up from the countryside, Jourdan heard, by message and the distant sound of gun-fire, that the right wing of the main army was engaged unsuccessfully in front of Charleroi. So, instead of laying formal siege to Namur, Jourdan moved southwestwards towards Charleroi and the rear flank of the enemy. His

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arrival intimidated the fortress into surrender, but Jourdan seems to have had no wider object in view. However, the innate psychological " pull " of such a move on to the enemy's rear gave him what Napoleon and other great captains sought as a calculated result. Coburg, the enemy commander-in-chief, hurried back eastwards, collecting such troops as he could on his way. He threw them into an attack upon Jourdan, who was entrenched to cover Charleroi, and although the struggle, famous as the battle of Fleurus, was severe, the French had the inestimable advantage of having strategically dislocated the enemy and having drawn him to attack with a fraction of his strength. The defeat of this fraction was followed by the general retreat of the allies.

But when the French, in turn, assumed the rôle of invaders, despite superior numbers they failed to achieve any decisive results in the main campaign across the Rhine. Indeed the campaign was in the end not merely blank, but blasted—and by an indirect approach. In July 1796 the Archduke Charles, faced by the renewed advance of the two superior armies of Jourdan and Moreau, decided, in his own words " to retire both armies (his own and Wartensleben's) step by step without committing himself to a battle, and to seize the first opportunity to unite them, so as to throw himself with superior, or at least equal, strength on one of the two hostile armies." But their pressure gave him no chance to practise this " interior lines " strategy—ordinary and direct, save in the idea of yielding ground—until it was changed into a truly indirect approach by the initiative of a cavalry brigadier, Nauendorff. This officer's wide reconnaissance showed him that the French were diverging to converge on and

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destroy Wartensleben. He sent the inspired message " If Your Royal Highness will or can advance 12,000 men against Jourdan's rear, he is lost." If the archduke's execution was not as bold as his subordinate's conception, it was sufficient to bring about the collapse of the French offensive. The disorderly retreat of Jourdan's shattered army back to and over the Rhine compelled Moreau to relinquish his successful progress in Bavaria and fall back similarly.

But while the main effort on the Rhine failed, and failed afresh later, the decision came from a secondary theatre—Italy—where Bonaparte converted a precarious defensive into a decisive indirect approach to a victorious end of the war. The plan was already in his mind two years before, when he had been a staff officer in this zone, and subsequently in Paris it had taken form as a limb of his general theory of war. Like other great prophets, he expressed his guiding ideas in parables, and as with them also, his disciples have usually misinterpreted these parables. Thus, in perhaps the most significant of all his maxims, he said : " The principles of war are the same as those of a siege. Fire must be concentrated on one point, and as soon as the breach is made the equilibrium is broken and the rest is nothing." Subsequent military theory has put the accent on the first clause instead of on the last ; in particular on the words " one point " instead of on the word " equilibrium." The former is but a physical metaphor, whereas the latter expresses the actual psychological result which ensures " that the rest is nothing." His own emphasis is to be perceived in the strategic course of his campaigns.

The word " point " even has been the source of much

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confusion and more controversy. One school argues that Napoleon meant that the concentrated blow must be aimed at the enemy's strongest point, on the ground that this, and this only, ensures decisive results. For if the enemy's main resistance be broken, its rupture will involve that of any lesser opposition. This argument ignores the factor of cost and the fact that the victor may be too exhausted to exploit his success—so that even a lesser resistance may acquire a relatively higher resisting power than the original. The other school, better imbued with the idea of economy of force, but only in the limited sense of first costs, contends that the objective must be the enemy's weakest point. But a point that is obviously left weak is usually so because it is remote from any vital artery or nerve centre, or because it is deliberately left to draw the assailant into a trap.

Here, again, illumination comes from the actual campaign into which Bonaparte put this maxim into execution. It reveals clearly that what he really meant was not "point," but "joint," and that at this stage of his career he was too firmly imbued with the idea of economy of force to waste his limited strength in battering at the enemy's strong point. A joint, however, is both vital and vulnerable.

It was at this time also that Bonaparte used another phrase that has subsequently been quoted to justify the most foolhardy concentrations of effort against the main armed forces of the enemy. "Austria is the great enemy; Austria crushed, Germany, Spain, Italy fall of themselves. We must not disperse, but concentrate our attack." But his execution of this idea shows that he conceived it not as a direct attack upon Austria, but as an indirect approach

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through Italy, and even in this secondary theatre, he aimed to knock out the junior partner, the Sardinian army, before turning against the senior partner.

Bonaparte lay on the Genoese Riviera, with the Austrians and Sardinians across the mountains to the north. As much by fortune as by design—yet none the less significant for that—Bonaparte gained the initial advantage of distracting the Austrians eastwards and the Sardinians westwards, then struck at the weakened joint where the two armies connected, and forcing the Austrians back eastwards again, gained time and space in which to concentrate westwards against the Sardinians. The "equilibrium was broken," and its psychological effect did more than physical defeat to make the Sardinians cry for an armistice which put them out of the war.

He was now superior to the Austrians alone (35,000 to 25,000). Did he advance directly upon them? No. The day after the Sardinian armistice had been settled he took Milan as his objective, but Tortona-Piacenza was his indirect way thither—or, rather, on to its rear. After deceiving the Austrians into a concentration at Valenza to oppose his expected north-eastward advance, he marched east instead along the south bank of the Po and thus, on reaching Piacenza, he had turned all the Austrians' possible lines of resistance. But his want of a bridging train delayed him at Piacenza when he turned north, and the hurried retreat of the Austrians carried them into safety, and the shelter of Mantua and the famous Quadrilateral of fortresses, before Bonaparte could use the Adda as a river block across the line of retreat. Even so he had gained Milan and the rich plains of Lombardy for his hungry and ragged army at no expense.

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He thereafter eschewed a direct advance towards the main enemy, Austria, as orthodox military motives would have suggested, and he also refused to march down into Central Italy as the Directory, with political motives, ordered him to do. Instead, with a shrewd adjustment of his end to his means, he used Mantua as a bait to draw successive Austrian relieving forces far from their base and into his jaws. And it is significant that he did not entrench himself in a covering position after the custom of the traditional general, but kept his forces mobile, disposed in a loose and wide-flung grouping which could be concentrated in any direction. On the first Austrian attempt at relief Bonaparte's method was imperilled by his own reluctance to give up the investment of Mantua, and only when he cut loose this anchor was he able to use his mobility to overthrow the Austrians at Castiglione. He was now ordered by the Directory to advance through the Tyrol and co-operate with the main Rhine army. The Austrians profited from his direct advance to slip away eastwards, through the Val Sugana, with the bulk of their force, down on the Venetian plain, and then westwards to Mantua. But Bonaparte, instead of pursuing his advance north, or falling back to guard Mantua, turned in hot chase of their tail through the mountains, thereby retorting to the enemy's indirect approach with one of his own, but with a decisive instead of a limited aim. He caught and crushed their hindquarters at Bassano, and when he emerged on to the Venetian plain in pursuit of the remainder, it is worth notice that he directed the pursuers to cut the enemy off from Trieste and their line of retreat to Austria, not to head them off from Mantua. Thus they became a fresh addition to Bonaparte's Man-

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tuan safe-deposit. The locking up of so much of her military capital drove Austria to a fresh expenditure. This time, and not for the last time, the directness of Bonaparte's tactics imperilled the successful indirectness of his strategy. When the Austrians drew near to Verona, his pivot for the guarding of Mantua, Bonaparte hurled himself at the van of their main columns and suffered a severe repulse. But instead of retreating he chose the daring course of a wide manoeuvre round their southern flank and on to their rear. The delays caused by marshes and water-courses increased the hazard of this manoeuvre, but, at least, its direction paralysed the enemy, and when the scales of battle were hanging in the balance at Arcola, Bonaparte resorted to a decisive tactical ruse, rare for him —that of sending a few trumpeters on to the Austrian rear to sound the charge. A few minutes later the stout-fighting Austrian troops were streaming away in flight. Two months later, in Jan. 1797, the Austrians made a fourth and last attempt to save Mantua, but this was shattered at Rivoli where Bonaparte's loose group formation functioned almost perfectly. Like a wide-spread net whose corners are weighted with stones, when one of the enemy's columns impinged on it the net closed in round the point of pressure and the stones crashed together on the intruder. This self-protective formation which thus, on impact, became a concentrated offensive formation, was Bonaparte's development of the new divisional system, by which an army was permanently subdivided into independently moving fractions instead of, as formerly, constituting a single body from which only temporary detachments were made. The group formation of Bonaparte's Italian campaigns became the

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more highly developed *bataillon carré*, with army corps replacing divisions, of his later wars. But though this loaded net was the means of crushing the Austrians' manoeuvring wing, it is significant to note that the collapse of their main resistance came from Bonaparte's audacity in sending a single regiment of 2,000 men across Lake Garda, in boats, to place themselves on the line of retreat of a whole army ! Mantua then surrendered, and the Austrians, who had lost their armies in the effort to save this outer gate to their country, had now to watch helplessly Bonaparte's swift approach to the defenceless inner gate. This wrung peace from Austria while the main French armies were still but a few miles beyond the Rhine.

In the autumn of 1798 the Second Coalition was formed by Russia, Austria, England, Turkey, Portugal and Naples, and the pope, to cast off the shackles of this peace treaty. Bonaparte was away in Egypt and when he returned the fortunes of France had sunk low. The field armies were greatly depleted, the treasury was empty, and the conscript levies were falling off. Bonaparte, who on his return had overthrown the Directory and become First Consul, ordered the formation at Dijon of an Army of Reserve, composed of all the home troops that could be scraped together. Did he use it to reinforce the main theatre of war, and the main army on the Rhine ? No. Instead, he planned the boldest of all his indirect approaches—a swoop along an immense arc on to the rear of the Austrian army in Italy. This had driven the small French " Army of Italy " back almost to the French frontier and penned it into the north-west corner of Italy. Bonaparte had intended to move through Switzerland, to

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Lucerne or Zurich, and to descend into Italy as far east as the St. Gothard pass, or even the Tyrol. But the news that the Army of Italy was hard pressed led him to take the shorter route by the St. Bernard. Thus, when he debouched from the Alps at Ivrea, in the last week of May, 1800, he was still on the right front of the Austrian army. Instead of pressing south-east, direct to the aid of Massena, who was shut up in Genoa, Bonaparte sent his advanced guard south to Cherasco, while, under cover of this "distraction," he himself, with the main body, slipped eastward to Milan. Thus, instead of advancing to meet the enemy "in their natural position," facing west at Alessandria, he gained a "natural position" across the Austrians' rear—that strategic barrage which was the initial objective of his deadliest manoeuvres against the enemy's rear. For such a position, offering natural obstacles, afforded him a secure pivot from which to prepare a firm embrace for the enemy, whose "natural" tendency, when cut off from their line of retreat and supply, was to turn and flow back, usually in driblets, towards him. This idea of the strategic barrage was Bonaparte's greatest contribution to the strategy of indirect approach.

At Milan he had barred one of the two Austrian routes of retreat, and now, extending his barrage south of the Po to the Stradella defile, he blocked the other also. But here, for the moment, his conception had somewhat outranged his means, for he had only 34,000 men, and owing to Moreau's reluctance, the corps of 15,000 that Bonaparte had ordered the Army of the Rhine to send over the St. Gothard was late in arriving. Concern over the thinness of his barrage became accentuated. And at this

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juncture Genoa capitulated, thereby removing his "fixative" agent. Uncertainty as to the route the Austrians might now take, and above all, the fear that they might shut themselves up in Genoa, where the British navy could re-victual them, led him to forfeit much of the advantage he had gained. For, crediting his opponents with more initiative than they possessed, he quitted his "natural position" at the Stradella and pushed westward to reconnoitre them, as well as to cut the road from Alessandria to Genoa. Thus he was caught at a disadvantage, with only part of his army at hand, when the Austrian army suddenly emerged from Alessandria and advanced to meet him on the plains of Marengo (June 14, 1800). The battle was long in doubt, and even when Desaix's detachment, that had been sent to the Genoa road, returned, the Austrians were only driven back. But then Bonaparte's strategic position came into play, and enabled him to wring from the demoralised Austrian commander an armistice by which the Austrians evacuated Lombardy and retired behind the Mincio. And although the war was resumed in a desultory fashion beyond the Mincio, the moral repercussion of Marengo was manifested in the armistice which closed the war of the Second Coalition six months later.

After several years of uneasy peace, the curtain that had fallen on the French Revolutionary Wars rose on a new act—the Napoleonic wars. In 1805 Napoleon's army of 200,000 men was assembled at Boulogne, menacing a descent on the English coast, when it was suddenly directed by forced marches to the Rhine. It is still uncertain whether Napoleon seriously intended a direct invasion of England, or whether his threat was merely the

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first move in his indirect approach to Austria. He calculated that the Austrians would, as usual, send an army into Bavaria to block the exits of the Black Forest, and on this basis planned his wide manoeuvre round their northern flank, across the Danube, and on to the Lech—his intended strategic barrage across their rear. It was a repetition, on a grander scale, of the Stradella manoeuvre and Napoleon himself emphasised this parallel to his troops. His superiority of force, moreover, enabled him, once the barrage was established, to convert it into a moving barrage. This, closing down on the rear of the Austrian army, led to its almost bloodless surrender at Ulm. Having wiped off this " weaker partner," Napoleon had now to deal with the Russian army under Kutuzov which, after traversing Austria and gathering in smaller Austrian contingents, had just reached the Inn. A less immediate threat was the return of the other Austrian armies from Italy and the Tyrol. The size of his forces was now, for the first but not the last time, an inconvenience to Napoleon. With such large armies the space between the Danube and the mountains to the south-west was too cramped for any local indirect approach to the enemy, and there was not time for a wide movement of the range of the Ulm manoeuvre. But so long as the Russians remained on the Inn they were in a " natural position," forming not only a shield to Austrian territory, but a shield under cover of which the other Austrian armies could come up from the south through Carinthia and join them in presenting Napoleon with a solid wall of resistance. Faced with this problem, Napoleon used a most subtle series of variations of the indirect approach. His first aim was to push the Russians as far east as

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possible, so as to separate them from the Austrian armies now returning from Italy. So, while advancing directly east towards Kutuzov and Vienna, he sent Mortier's corps along the north bank of the Danube. This threat to Kutuzov's communications with Russia was sufficient to induce him to fall back obliquely north-eastwards to Krems on the Danube. Napoleon thereupon despatched Murat on a dash across Kutuzov's new front, with Vienna as his goal. From Vienna Murat was directed northwards on Hollabrunn. Thus, after first threatening the Russians' right flank, Napoleon now menaced their left rear. If this move, owing to Murat's mistaken agreement to a temporary truce, failed to cut off the Russians, it at least drove them into a hurried retreat still further north-east to Olmütz, within close reach of their own frontier. But although they were now "distracted" far from the Austrian reinforcements, they were nearer to their own, and at Olmütz they actually received a large instalment. To press them further back would only consolidate their strength. Besides, time pressed, and the entry of Prussia into the war was imminent. Hence Napoleon resorted to the indirect "approach" of tempting the Russians into taking the offensive by a subtle display of his own apparent weakness. To face the 80,000 men of the enemy army, he concentrated only 50,000 at Brünn, and thence pushed out isolated detachments towards Olmütz. This impression of weakness he supplemented by "doves of peace" to the Tsar and the Austrian emperor. When the enemy swallowed the bait, Napoleon recoiled before them to a position at Austerlitz designed by nature to fit his trap, and in the battle which followed used one of his rare examples of the tactical indirect approach to offset his

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equally rare inferiority of numbers on the battlefield. Luring the enemy to stretch their left in an attack on his line of retreat, he swung round his centre against the weakened "joint" and thereby obtained a victory so decisive that within 24 hours the Emperor of Austria asked for peace.

When, a few months later, Napoleon turned to deal with Prussia, he had a superiority of almost two to one available, an army that was "grand" both in quantity and quality against one that was defective in training and obsolete in outlook. The effect of this assured superiority on Napoleon's strategy is marked, and has a growing influence on the conduct of his later campaigns. In 1806 he still seeks, and gains, the advantage of initial surprise. To this end he had cantoned his troops near the Danube, and thence swiftly concentrated to the north behind the natural screen formed by the Thuringian forest. Next, debouching suddenly from the wooded range into the open country beyond, his *bataillon carré* drove straight ahead towards the heart of the enemy country. Thus, Napoleon rather found himself, than placed himself, on the rear of the Prussian forces, and in swinging round to crush them at Jena, seems to have relied primarily on sheer weight, the moral effect of his position being incidental, although important.

So also in the campaign against the Russians, in Poland and East Prussia, which followed, Napoleon seems concerned mainly with the single end of bringing his enemy to battle, confident that, when this happened, his machine would overpower the enemy. He still uses the manoeuvre on to the enemy's rear, but it is more as a means of gripping them firmly, so that they can be drawn into his

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jaws, than as a means of liquefying their morale, so that mastication may be easier.

The indirect approach is here a means of distraction and physical "traction" rather than of distraction and moral dislocation.

Thus in the Pultusk manoeuvre he aims to draw the Russians westwards so that when he advances north from Poland, he may cut them off from Russia. The Russians slipped out of his jaws. In Jan. 1807 the Russians moved westwards on their own volition, towards the remnant of their Prussian allies at Danzig, and Napoleon was quick to seize the opportunity to cut their communications with Prussia. His instructions, however, fell into the hands of the Cossacks and the Russian army fell back just in time. Napoleon, thereupon, followed them up directly and, finding them in a frontal position at Eylau, ready to accept battle, relied on a purely tactical manoeuvre against their rear. The mechanism suffered from the interference of snowstorms, and the Russians, though mauled, were not masticated. Four months later both sides had recuperated and the Russians suddenly moved south against Heilsburg, whereupon Napoleon wheeled his *bataillon carré* east to cut them off from Königsberg, their immediate base. But this time he was so apparently obsessed with the idea of battle that when his cavalry, reconnoitring to the flank of his route, reported the presence of the Russians in a strong position at Friedland, he swung his forces straight at the target. The tactical victory was won, not by surprise or mobility, but by pure offensive power—here expressed in Napoleon's new artillery tactics, the massed concentration of guns at a selected point. This was to become more and more the

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driving shaft of his tactical mechanism. If at Friedland, as often later, it ensured victory, it did little to save lives. It is curious how the possession of a blank cheque on the bank of man-power had so analogous an effect in 1807-14 and in 1914-18. And curious, also, that in each case it was associated with the method of intense artillery bombardments.

Is the explanation that lavish expenditure breeds extravagance, the mental antithesis of economy of force—to which surprise and mobility are the means? The hypothesis is strengthened by the similarity of effect seen in Napoleon's policy.

Napoleon was able to use the glamour of his victory at Friedland to reinforce the glamour of his personality in seducing the Tsar from his consorts in the Fourth Coalition. But he then risked his advantage, and ultimately his empire, by excess in exploiting it. The severity of his terms to Prussia undermined the security of the peace, his policy towards England contemplated nothing short of her ruin, and his aggression raised Spain and Portugal as fresh enemies. Here it is apt to note that it was an indirect approach, Sir John Moore's brief "in and out" thrust against Burgos and the communications of the French forces in Spain, which dislocated Napoleon's plans in Spain, gave the national rising time and space to gather strength, and thus ensured that the Iberian peninsula should henceforth be a running sore in Napoleon's side. Above all, the moral influence of this first check to Napoleon's irresistible progress gives it a decisive significance. Napoleon had no chance to redeem it, for he was called back by the threatened uprising of Prussia and the fresh intervention of Austria. The latter

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matured, and in the campaign of 1809 we see Napoleon again trying, at Landshut and Vienna, to manoeuvre on to the enemy's rear. But when hitches occur in the execution of these manoeuvres Napoleon's impatience leads him to gamble on a direct approach and battle, and at Aspern-Essling he suffers in consequence his first great defeat. If he retrieves it by the victory of Wagram at the same point, six weeks later, the price is high and the peace thereby gained unstable.

The Peninsular War

But Napoleon had two years' grace in which to operate on and cure the "Spanish ulcer." As Moore's intervention had thwarted Napoleon's attempt to check the inflammatory condition in its early stages, so in the years that followed Wellington was to hinder all remedial measures and enable the wound to fester and the poison to spread through the Napoleonic system. The French had beaten and continued to beat any regular Spanish forces, but the thoroughness of these defeats was of the greatest benefit—to the defeated. For it ensured that the main effort of the Spanish was thrown into guerrilla warfare, that an intangible web of guerrilla bands replaced a vulnerable military target, and that enterprising and unconventional guerrilla leaders conducted operations instead of hide-bound Spanish generals. The worst misfortune for Spain, and hence for England, was the temporary success of attempts to form fresh regular forces. Fortunately these were soon beaten, and as the French dispersed them so, coincidently, did they disperse their own good fortune. The poison spread again instead of coming to a head. In this curious warfare England's

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most profound influence was in aggravating the trouble and encouraging the sources of it. Rarely has she caused a greater " distraction " to her opponents at the price of so small a military effort. And the effect produced in Spain was in significant contrast with the slight results, indeed, the unhappy results, produced on the one hand by her attempts at direct co-operation with her Continental allies during these wars, and on the other by her expeditions to transatlantic points too remote, geographically and psychologically, to affect her opponent. From the standpoint of national policy and prosperity the second class of expedition, however, had its justification in adding Cape Colony, Mauritius, Ceylon, British Guiana, and several West Indian islands to the British Empire.

But the real effect of England's grand strategic indirect approach in Spain has been obscured by the traditional tendency of historians to become obsessed with battles. Indeed, by treating the Peninsular War as a chronicle of Wellington's battles and sieges it becomes meaningless. Sir John Fortescue has done much to correct this tendency and fallacy, despite the fact that he is primarily concerned with the localised " History of the British Army," and it is significant that as his own researches have deepened he has given more and more emphasis to the predominant influence of the Spanish guerrillas on the issue of the struggle.

If the presence of the British expeditionary force was an essential foundation for this influence, Wellington's battles were perhaps the least effective part of his operations. By them he inflicted a total loss of some 45,000 only, counting killed, wounded and prisoners, on the French during the five years' campaign until they were

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driven out of Spain, whereas Marbot reckoned that the number of French deaths alone during this period averaged a hundred a day. Hence it is a clear deduction that the overwhelming majority of the losses which drained the French strength, and their morale still more, was due to the operations of the guerrillas, and of Wellington himself, in harrying the French and in making the country a desert where the French stayed only to starve. Not the least significant feature is that Wellington fought so few battles in so long a series of campaigns. Was this due to that essentially practical "common-sense" which biographers have declared to be the key to his character and outlook? In the words of his latest biographer "direct and narrow realism was the essence of Wellington's character. It was responsible for his limitations and defects, but in the larger stage of his public career it amounted to genius." The diagnosis fits in marvellously well with the symptoms, both good and ill, of Wellington's strategy in the peninsula.

The expedition which was to have such momentous consequences was itself a subtraction of force from the main and abortive effort on the Scheldt, and was undertaken more from the hope of saving Portugal than from any deep appreciation of its grand strategic potentialities in aggravating the "Spanish ulcer." Castlereagh's uphill advocacy, however, was aided by Wellesley's expression of opinion that if the Portuguese army and militia were reinforced by 20,000 British troops, the French would need 100,000 to conquer Portugal, a quantity they could not spare if the Spanish still continued to resist. Expressed in a different way, this might mean that 20,000 British would suffice to cause the "distraction" of nearly

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100,000 French, part at least from the main theatre of war in Austria.

As an aid to Austria the expedition was to prove of no avail, and as a shield to Portugal not altogether satisfactory from a Portuguese standpoint. But as a strain on Napoleon and an advantage to England it bore fruit tenfold.

Wellesley was given 26,000 men and in April 1809 he arrived at Lisbon. Partly as a result of the Spanish insurrection and partly as a sequel to Moore's thrust at Burgos and retreat to Corunna, the French were widely scattered over the peninsula. Ney was vainly trying to subdue Galicia in the extreme north-western corner. South of him, but in the north of Portugal, Soult lay at Oporto, with his army itself dispersed in detachments. Victor lay round Merida facing the southern route into Portugal.

Profiting by his central position, his unexpected appearance, and the enemy's dispersion, Wellesley moved north against Soult and, although he failed to cut off Soult's most southerly detachments as he had planned, he surprised Soult himself before the latter could assemble his force, upset his dispositions by a crossing higher up the Douro, and developed this incipient dislocation by heading Soult off from his natural line of retreat. Like Turenne in 1675 Wellesley liquidated the resistance without it ever having had the chance to coagulate, and at the end of Soult's enforced retreat through the black mountains northward into Galicia his army had suffered loss and exhaustion out of all proportion to the fighting.

Wellesley's second operation, however, was neither so profitable nor so well-conceived in its adjustment of end and means. Victor, who had remained passively at

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Merida, was recalled after Soult's "disappearance" to Talavera, covering the direct approach to Madrid. A month later Wellesley decided to march by this route on Madrid, pushing into the heart of Spain and himself into the lion's jaws. For he was offering a target on which all the French armies in Spain could concentrate by the easiest routes. Moreover, by thus rallying on their central pivot they had the chance of knitting together the communications between them which when they were scattered was almost their greatest source of weakness. Wellesley advanced with 23,000 men added to as many Spanish under the feeble Cuesta, while Victor in falling back had brought himself within close reach of support from two other French forces near Madrid. The hostile concentration, too, was likely to total over 100,000, for "through accident rather than design," as Fortescue says, the forces of Ney, Soult, and Mortier had drifted Madridwards from the north. If fortune favours the calculating bold, it sometimes turns against the rash. Hampered by Cuesta's irresolution and his own supplies, Wellesley did not succeed in joining issue with Victor until the latter was reinforced by Joseph Bonaparte from Madrid. Constrained to fall back in his turn, Wellesley emerged somewhat luckily from a defensive battle at Talavera, but would have advanced again if Cuesta had not refused. It was fortunate, for Soult was descending upon his rear. Cut off from the route by which he had come, Wellesley escaped by slipping south of the Tagus, but only after a costly, demoralising and exhausting retreat did he regain the shelter of the Portuguese frontier. Want of food paralysed the French pursuit. This closed the campaign of 1809 and taught Wellesley the worthlessness of

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Spanish regular forces—a lesson he might have learnt from Moore's experience. In reward he was created Viscount Wellington. He was to earn it still better the next year.

For in 1810, with Austria now driven to peace, Napoleon was free to concentrate his attention on Spain and Portugal until 1812. These two years were the critical period of the Peninsular war, and the inability of the French to accomplish their purpose is of far greater historical significance than their subsequent defeats, and Wellington's victories, in 1812 and 1813. The foundation of the British success was Wellington's shrewd calculation of the economic factor—the limited French means of subsistence—and his creation of the lines of Torres Vedras. His strategy was essentially that of indirect approach to a military economic object and objective. In the prologue he was aided by the Spanish regular forces in their customary way. They embarked on a winter campaign and were so thoroughly crushed and dispersed that the French, deprived of any target, were induced to stretch themselves more widely than ever over Spain, invading the river province of Andalusia in the south.

Napoleon now took control, if from a distance, and by the end of February, 1810, had concentrated nearly 300,000 men in Spain, with more to come. Of these, 65,000 were assigned to Massena for the task of driving the British out of Portugal. If the number was large, overweighting Wellington, its small proportion to the whole is illuminating evidence of the greater strain of the guerrilla war in Spain. And Wellington, by the inclusion and British training of the Portuguese had made up his total to 50,000.

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Massena's invasion came by the north, past Ciudad Rodrigo, and thus gave Wellington the longest time and space for his strategy to take effect. His precautions in stripping the country of provisions formed a "transmission" brake on Massena's advance, while his halfway stand at Busaco served as a foot-brake which was strengthened by Massena's folly in committing his troops to a needless direct assault. Then Wellington fell back to the lines of Torres Vedras, which he had constructed across the mountainous peninsula formed by the Tagus and the sea, to cover Lisbon. On October 14, four months and barely two hundred miles from his start, Massena came within sight of the lines, a sight which struck him with the full shock of surprise. Unable to force them, he hung on for a month until compelled by starvation to retreat to Santarem, thirty miles back on the Tagus. Wellington shrewdly made no attempt to press his retreat or bring on a battle, but set himself to confine Massena within the smallest possible area so that he might have the greatest possible difficulty in feeding his men. Wellington maintained this strategy resolutely despite the indirect risk of a change of Government at home and the direct risk caused by Soult's advance in the south by Badajoz, as a diversion to relieve the constriction of Massena. And he withstood every effort of Massena to draw him into an attack. He was both justified and rewarded, for at last in March Massena had to go, and when the starving wreckage of his army recrossed the frontier he had lost 25,000 men, of whom only 2,000 had fallen in action.

Meantime the Spanish guerrillas had been growing ever more active and numerous. In Aragon and Cata-

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lonia alone two French corps, totalling nearly 60,000 men, instead of helping Massena's Army of Portugal had been practically paralysed during several months by a few thousand guerrillas and troops used guerrilla-wise. In the south, too, where the French were besieging Cadiz, the very failure of the allies to exploit their victory at Barrosa and raise the siege was an advantage by retaining the besieging troops there on a vain task. Another distracting influence during these years was the constant threat and frequent fact of British landings, at points along the immense coastline, made possible by sea-power.

Henceforth Wellington's greatest influence came through his threats rather than his blows, for whenever he threatened a point the French were forced to draw off troops thither and so give the guerrillas greater scope in other districts. Wellington, however, was not content with threats but, following up Massena's retreat on Salamanca, used his army to cover the blockade of the frontier fortress of Almeida in the north, while he directed Beresford to invest Badajoz in the south. Thereby he tied up his own mobility, and divided his force into two nearly equal parts. But fortune favoured his course. Massena, having rallied and slightly reinforced his army, came back to the rescue of Almeida, and at Fuentes de Oñoro Wellington, although overweighted and seriously imperilled, managed to beat off the attack. Near Badajoz, too, Beresford marched out to meet Soult's relieving force; after mishandling the fight and admitting defeat at Albuera the situation was saved for him by his subordinates and troops, if at an exorbitant cost. Wellington now concentrated on the siege of Badajoz, without a siege train, until he had to raise the siege as a result of the

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unfettered move southwards of Massena's army, now under Marmont, to join Soult. The two now planned a united advance on Wellington, but fortunately fusion brought friction and Soult, alarmed by the fresh blaze-up of guerrilla war in Andalusia, returned thither with part of his army, leaving Marmont in control. And thanks to Marmont's extreme caution, the campaign of 1811 petered out quietly.

By his battles Wellington had risked much, indeed all, and it would be hard to argue that they had gained much advantage beyond that already produced and promised by his earlier strategy. Nor in view of his slender margin of strength were they a profitable investment, for his loss in them was little less than the French and proportionately much greater. But he had tided over the most critical period, and now Napoleon and the Spanish came to his aid and to secure his advantage. For Napoleon was preparing his invasion of Russia. Thither his attention and his strength were henceforth turned. This development and the trying guerrilla situation caused a change of plan in Spain, where the main French line of effort was altered to an attempt to subdue Valencia and Andalusia thoroughly before concentrating afresh against Portugal. Compared with 1810 the French troops were reduced by 70,000 and of those who remained no less than 90,000, from Tarragona on the Mediterranean coast to Oviedo on the Atlantic coast, were employed in practically no other duty than that of securing the communications with France against the guerrillas.

Thus given free scope and weakened opposition, Wellington sprang suddenly on Ciudad Rodrigo and stormed it, while a detachment under Hill stood guard

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over his strategic flank and rear. Marmont was helpless to intervene, helpless to retake the fortress because his siege-train had been captured there, and helpless also to follow Wellington across the food-stripped country between them. Under cover of this hunger-screen Wellington slipped south and stormed Badajoz in turn, if at a far greater cost and by a narrower margin of time. At Badajoz he captured the French pontoon-train, and as he promptly followed up this gain by destroying the French bridge of boats across the Tagus at Almaraz, he thereby achieved a definite strategic separation of the two armies of Marmont and Soult, whose nearest way of communication was now by the bridge at Toledo, over three hundred miles from the mouth of the Tagus. Apart from this, however, Soult was tied fast to Andalusia by a want of supplies and surfeit of guerrillas, and Wellington, now able to operate secure from interference, concentrated two-thirds of his strength for an advance on Marmont at Salamanca. But the directness of his approach propelled Marmont back towards his source of reinforcement and, the balance of numbers restored, Marmont manoeuvred against Wellington's communications, with all the more advantage because he had none of his own to worry about. But over-confidence led to a slip which momentarily dislocated his own forces and Wellington instantly exploited and accentuated it by a tactical indirect approach which caused the severe defeat of the French army before further reinforcements could reach it. He did not, however, achieve its real disruption and he was still heavily inferior to the French in the peninsula as a whole. He has been blamed for not following up the defeated French, now under Clausel, but having lost the immediate chance of

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dispersing them it is unlikely that he could have regained it before they reached the shelter of Burgos, and such a move would have exposed him to the risk that Joseph from Madrid might have descended at any moment on his rear and communications. Instead he decided to make a move on Madrid for its moral and political effect. His entry into the capital was a symbol and a tonic to the Spanish, while Joseph made a fugitive exit. But the defect of this *coup* was that Wellington's stay could only be fugitive if the French gathered in force, and nothing was more likely to make their armies, scattered on the circumference, rally on the centre than the loss of Madrid. Wellington cut his stay short without compulsion and marched on Burgos. But the French system of "living on the country" deprived a stroke at their communications with France of anything like a normal influence on their situation. And even the limited influence was forfeited by the ineffectiveness of Wellington's siege methods and means, whereby time dribbled away that he could not afford to lose. For his very success at and after the battle of Salamanca had induced the French to abandon their tasks and territory in Spain in order to concentrate from all quarters upon Wellington. In relation to their armies he was more dangerously placed than Moore before him, but he fell back just in time and once Hill joined him felt secure enough to offer battle to the united French armies at Salamanca. Their numerical advantage was slight compared with earlier days, 90,000 to 68,000, and they did not feel inclined to accept the challenge on a battle-field chosen by Wellington. Hence Wellington continued his retreat to Ciudad Rodrigo, and with his arrival there the curtain came down on the campaign of 1812.

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Although he was back once more on the Portuguese frontier and so superficially no further forward, actually the Peninsular War was decided. For by abandoning the greater part of Spain to concentrate against him, the French had abandoned it to the guerrillas and abandoned any chance of shaking their grip. On top of this disaster came the news of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow and the consequent withdrawal of more French troops from Spain. Thus when the next campaign opened the situation had completely changed. Wellington, now reinforced to 100,000 men, less than half British, was the aggressor and the superior, while the French, demoralised more by the strain of the incessant guerrilla war than by military defeats, were almost at once compelled to fall back behind the Ebro and reduced to the rôle of trying to hold on to the northern fringe of Spain. And even there the scales were turned against them by the pressure of guerrillas in their rear, in Biscay and the Pyrenees districts, which forced the French to subtract four divisions from their slender strength to withstand this back pressure. Wellington's gradual advance to the Pyrenees and into France, though flecked by occasional misadventures, successfully retrieved, is but a strategic epilogue to the story of the Peninsular War.

This happy conclusion could hardly have come but for the moral and physical support of Wellington's presence in the peninsula, and his activities, by distracting the attention of the French in part to him, repeatedly facilitated the spread of the guerrilla war. Yet it is a question, and an interesting speculation, whether his victories in 1812 by stirring the French to cut their loss and contract their zone did not improve their prospects and make

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his own advance harder in 1813. For the wider and the longer they were dispersed throughout Spain, the more sure and more complete would be their ultimate collapse. The Peninsular War was an outstanding historical example, achieved by instinctive common-sense even more than by intention, of the type of strategy which a century later Lawrence evolved into a reasoned theory, and applied in practice if without so definite a fulfilment.

From the " Spanish ulcer " we have now to turn back to examine another type of strategical growth, which was insidiously affecting Napoleon's own mind.

Napoleon from Vilna to Waterloo

The Russian campaign of 1812 is the natural climax to the tendencies already seen to be growing in Napoleon's strategy—that of relying more and more on mass than on mobility, and on strategic formation rather than on surprise. The geographical conditions merely serve to accentuate its weaknesses.

The very scale of Napoleon's forces, 450,000 men, induces him to adopt an almost linear distribution, which in turn entails a direct approach along the line of natural expectation. It is true that, like the Germans in 1914, he " loaded " one end—the left—of his line, and sought to swing it round in a vast sweep upon the Russians at Vilna. But even allowing for his brother Jerome's inertia in the rôle of fixing the enemy, this manoeuvre was too cumbrous and too direct to be an effective means of distracting and dislocating the enemy unless he had been of abnormal stupidity. And in the event its limitations were exposed by the Russians' deliberate adoption of a strategy of

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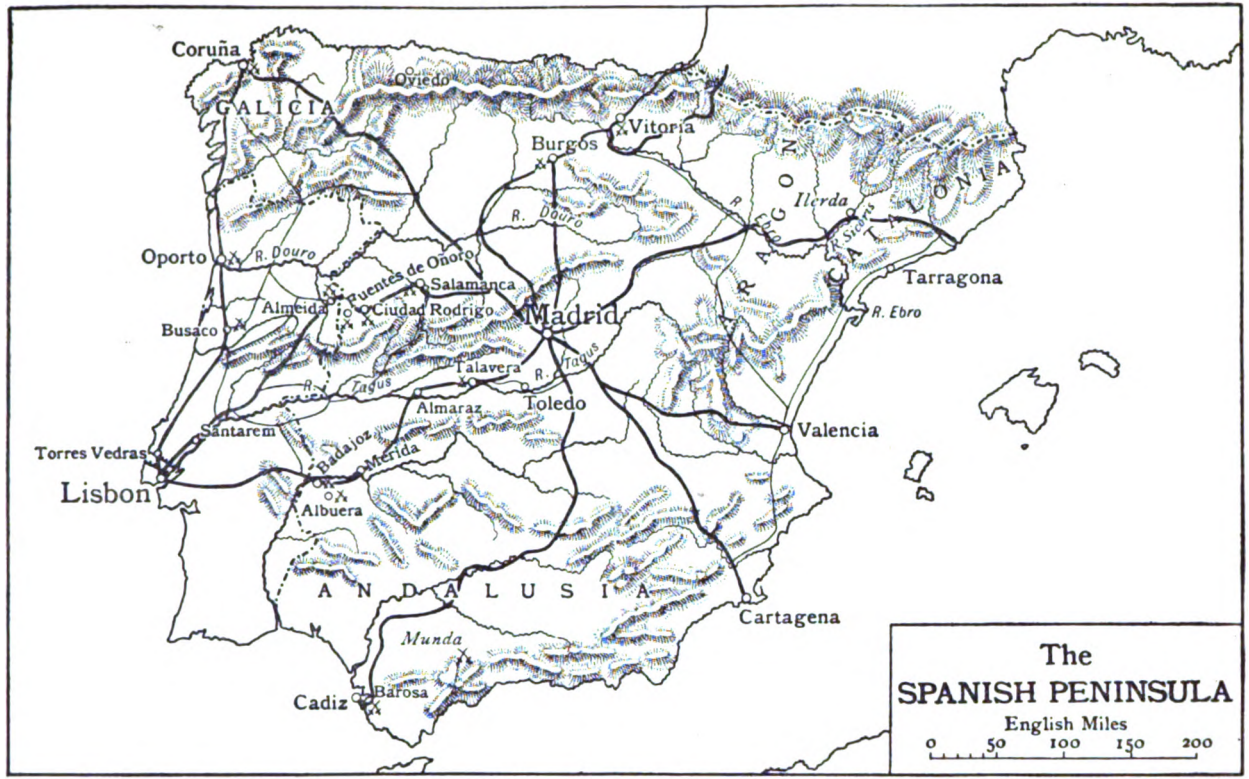

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evasion. As Napoleon pressed on into Russia, after his first blows "in the air," he contracted his line into his customary *bataillon carré* and tried to swing it tactically on to the enemy's rear. But even when the Russians, changing to a "battle" policy, were so foolish as to push their heads towards Napoleon's jaws, these jaws closed so obviously at Smolensk that the Russians slipped out, while at Borodino the jaws broke off their own teeth. No example could have better demonstrated the drawbacks of a convergent as compared with a true indirect approach. The disastrous results of the subsequent retreat from Moscow were due less to the severe weather—the frost was actually later than usual that year—than to the demoralization of the French Army. And this was caused through the frustration of its direct battle-aimed strategy by the Russian strategy of evasion, which in turn was the strategic method here used to carry out a war policy of indirect approach.

Moreover, the harm done to Napoleon's fortunes by his defeat in Russia was immensely increased by the moral and material effects of the ill-success of his armies in Spain. And it is significant to note in assessing the deadly effect of England's action here that, in it, England was following her traditional war policy of severing the roots.

When in 1813 Napoleon, with fresh forces more massive and less mobile than ever, was confronted with the uprising of Prussia and the invading armies of Russia, he sought to crush them in his now habitual way by the converging weight of his *bataillon carré*. But neither the battle of Lützen nor the battle of Bautzen was decisive, and thereafter the allies by an ever-lengthening retirement thwarted Napoleon's further attempts to bring them to battle.

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Their " evasiveness " induced Napoleon to ask for a six weeks' suspension, and when it terminated Austria also was arrayed with his enemies. The autumn campaign which followed throws a curious light on Napoleon's changed mentality. He had 400,000 men, a total nearly equal to that of his opponents. He used 100,000 for a convergent advance against Berlin, but this direct pressure merely consolidated the resistance of Bernadotte's forces in that area, and the French were thrown back. Meantime Napoleon himself with the main army had taken up a central position covering Dresden in Saxony. But his impatience overcame him and he suddenly began to advance directly east upon Blücher's 95,000. Blücher fell back to lure him on into Silesia, while Schwarzenberg, with 185,000, began to move northward down the Elbe from Bohemia and across the Bohemian mountains into Saxony, *i.e.* on to Napoleon's rear at Dresden. Leaving a detachment behind, Napoleon hurried back, intending to counter this indirect approach with a still more deadly one. His plan was to move south-west, cross the Bohemian mountains and place himself in an ideal strategic barrage across Schwarzenberg's line of retreat through the mountains. But the news of the enemy's close approach made him lose his nerve, and at the last moment he decided instead on a direct approach to Dresden and Schwarzenberg. This resulted in another victorious battle, but it was only tactically decisive and Schwarzenberg retreated safely southward through the mountains. Thus a month later the three allied armies began to close in upon Napoleon who, weakened by his battles, had fallen back from Dresden to Düben, near Leipzig. Schwarzenberg lay to the south, Blücher to the north,

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and, unknown to Napoleon, Bernadotte was almost round and behind his northern flank. Napoleon decided on a direct, followed by an indirect, approach—first, to crush Blücher and then to cut Schwarzenberg's communications with Bohemia. In the light of historical experience as set forth in earlier pages, it would seem that the sequence was at fault. Napoleon's direct move on Blücher did not bring him to battle. Yet it had one curious result all the more significant because it was unpremeditated. The direct move on Blücher was, quite unrealised, an indirect move on Bernadotte's rear. And by unnerving Bernadotte it led him to fall back hurriedly northward, and so removed him from Napoleon's line of retreat. Thereby this blow in the air at Blücher saved Napoleon from utter disaster a few days later. For when Blücher and Schwarzenberg closed in upon him at Leipzig, Napoleon accepted the gage of battle and suffered defeat, but in his extremity still had a path by which he could extricate himself and withdraw safely to France.

When in 1814 the allies, now vastly superior in numbers, made their converging invasion of France, Napoleon was drawn, for want of the numbers he had expended—through his imperial faith in the power of mass—to resort to and resharpen his old tools of surprise and mobility. Nevertheless, brilliant as his handling of them, the accent should be put on the word "his"; for he was too impatient, and too obsessed with the idea of battle to use them with the artistic subtlety of a Hannibal, a Scipio, a Cromwell or a Marlborough. By their use, however, he long postponed his fate. And in using them he made a discerning adjustment between his end and his means. Realising that his means were too impoverished to obtain

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a military decision, he aimed to dislocate the co-operation between the allied armies, and exploited mobility more astonishingly than ever to this end. Even so, remarkable as his success in retarding the enemy's end, it might perhaps have been more effective and enduring if his ability to continue this strategy had not been diminished by his inherent tendency to consummate every strategic by a tactical success. By repeated concentrations—five of them marked by manoeuvres which *struck* the target in rear—against the separated fractions of enemy, he inflicted a series of defeats until he was rash enough to make a direct approach and attack on Blücher at Laon, and suffered a defeat that he could not afford. With only 30,000 men left he decided, as a last throw, to move eastward to St. Dizier, rally such garrisons as he could find, and raise the countryside against the invaders. By this move he would be across Schwarzenberg's communications; he had, however, not only to place himself on the enemy's rear but to raise an army there before he could act. And the problem was complicated not only by lack of a force and lack of time, but by the peculiar moral sensitiveness of the base he thereby uncovered. For Paris was not like an ordinary base of supply. As a crowning mishap his instructions fell into the enemy's hands and thus both surprise and time were forfeited. Even so, such was the strategic " pull " of his move that only after heated debate did the allies resolve to move into Paris—thereby delivering a moral " knock-out "—instead of turning back to counter Napoleon. And it has been suggested that the factor which influenced their decision was the fear that Wellington, moving up from the Spanish frontier, would reach Paris first. If this be true it forms an ironical final

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triumph for the strategy of indirect approach and its decisive " pull."

In 1815, after his return from Elba, the size of Napoleon's forces seems to have sent the " blood " to his head again. Nevertheless, in his own fashion he used both surprise and mobility, and in consequence came within reach of a decisive result. If his approach to the armies of Blücher and Wellington was geographically direct, its timing was a surprise, and its direction dislocated the enemy's " joint." But at Ligny Ney failed to carry out the manoeuvre rôle allotted to him—the tactical indirect approach—and thus the Prussians escaped decisive defeat. And when Napoleon turned on Wellington at Waterloo his approach was purely direct, thus entailing a loss both of time and men which accentuated the greater trouble caused by Grouchy's failure to keep Blücher "distracted" well away from the battlefield. Thus Blücher's appearance, even though he merely arrived on Napoleon's flank, by its unexpectedness was psychologically an indirect approach, and as such was decisive against Napoleon.

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CHAPTER VIII

1854-1914

WHEN the great "Peace" Exhibition of 1851 ushered in a fresh era of bellicosity, the first war of the new series was as indecisive in its military course as in its political end. Yet from the squalor and stupidity of the Crimean War we can at least cull negative lessons and chief among them that of the barrenness of the direct approach. When the generals wore blinkers it was natural that an aide-de-camp should launch the Light Brigade straight at the Russian guns. In the British army the directness which permeated every sphere of action was so extremely precise and rigidly formal that it perplexed the French commander, Canrobert, until some years later he attended a Court Ball. Then light came to him and he exclaimed "The British fight as Victoria dances." But the Russians, happily, were as deeply imbued with the instinct of directness—so that even when a spasmodic manoeuvre was attempted, a regiment, after marching all day, finally found itself back facing Sebastopol as at daybreak.

In studying the depressing evidence of the Crimea we cannot overlook, although we should not exaggerate, the fact that in the forty years which had elapsed since Waterloo the armies of Europe had become more strictly professionalised. Its significance is not as an argument against professional armies, but as an illustration of the latent dangers of a professional environment. These dangers are inevitably accentuated on the higher levels, and with

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length of service, unless counteracted by revivifying touch with the outer world of affairs and thought. On the other hand, the early stages of the American Civil War were to reveal the weaknesses of an unprofessional army. Training is essential to forge an effective instrument for the general to handle. A long war or a short peace afford the most favourable conditions for the production of such an instrument. But there is a defect in the system if the instrument is superior to the artist. In this, as in other aspects, the American Civil War of 1861-1865 offers an illuminating contrast. The military leaders, especially in the South, were mainly drawn from those who had made arms their profession, but the pursuit of this profession had in most cases been varied with civil employment or leisure for individual study. And the parade ground had not been either the breeding ground or the boundary of their strategical ideas. Nevertheless, despite a refreshing breadth of view and fertility of resource in what may be termed local strategy, the conventional aim at first directed the major operations. In the opening campaign the opposing armies sought each other in a direct advance, and the result was indecisive alike in Virginia and in Missouri. Then McClellan, appointed to the commander-in-chief of the North, in 1862 conceived the plan of utilising sea-power to transfer his army on to the enemy's strategic flank—not their rear. If this undoubtedly had richer prospects than a direct overland advance, it seems to have been conceived more as the means of a shorter direct approach to Richmond, the enemy's capital, than as an indirect approach in the true sense. But these prospects were nullified by President Lincoln's reluctance to accept a calculated risk, in consequence of which he

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kept back McDowell's corps for the direct protection of Washington and so deprived McClellan, not only of part of his strength but of the element of distraction essential to the success of his plan. Hence on landing he lost a month in front of Yorktown and the plan had to be altered to a convergent or semi-direct approach in conjunction with McDowell, who was only allowed to advance overland along the direct approach from Washington to Richmond. Then, however, "Stonewall" Jackson's indirect operations in the Shenandoah Valley exerted such a moral influence on the Washington Government as again to suspend McDowell's share in the main advance. Even so, McClellan's advanced troops were within four miles of Richmond, ready for the final spring, before Lee was sufficiently strong to intervene. And even after McClellan's tactical set-back in the Seven Days' Battles, he had the strategical advantage, perhaps greater than before, for the interruption of his flank march had not prevented him switching his base southwards to the James River, whereby he had not only secured his own communications but placed himself dangerously close to the enemy's communications running southward from Richmond. But the advantage was forfeited by a change of strategy. Halleck, placed over McClellan's head from political motives as general-in-chief, ordered McClellan's army to be re-embarked and withdrawn northward to unite with Pope's army in a direct overland advance. As so often in history a direct doubling of strength meant not a doubling but a halving of the effect through simplifying the enemy's "lines of expectation." Yet Halleck's strategy fulfils the obvious interpretation of the principle of concentration—thereby revealing the pitfalls which

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underlie the glib use of this popular panacea for all military ills. The ineffectiveness of the strategy of direct approach which ruled throughout the second half of 1862 was appropriately sealed by the bloody repulse at Fredericksburg on December 13. And the continuance of this strategy in 1863 led, not to a closer approach to Richmond, but to a Confederate invasion of Northern territory following the collapse of the Federal offensive. The direct invasion was in turn repulsed at Gettysburg, and the close of the year saw both armies back at their original positions, both too drained of blood to do more than bare their teeth at each other across the Rapidan and Rappahannock. It is significant that in these campaigns of mutual direct approach, such advantage as there was inclined in turn to the side which stood on the defensive, content to counter the other's advance. For in such strategical conditions the defensive, by its mere avoidance of vain effort, is inherently the less direct form of two direct strategies.

The repulse of Lee's invasion at Gettysburg has commonly been acclaimed the turning-point of the war, but the claim is only justified in a dramatic sense, and the sober verdict of historical opinion has more and more emphasised that the decisive effects came from the West. The first was as early as April 1862 when Farragut's squadron ran past the forts guarding the mouth of the Mississippi and thereby gained the bloodless surrender of New Orleans. It was truly the thin end of a strategical wedge which split the Confederacy up the vital line of this great river.

The second decisive effect was achieved higher up the Mississippi on the same day, July 4, as Lee began his

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retreat from Gettysburg. This was the capture of Vicksburg by Grant, which gave the Federals complete control of this vital artery. Thereby the Confederacy was deprived permanently of the nourishment of reinforcements and supplies from the Trans-Mississippi states. But the grand strategical effect of this concentration against the junior partner should not be allowed to overshadow the strategical means by which it was achieved. The first approach to Vicksburg in December 1862 had been essentially direct, and had failed. In February and March 1863 four unsuccessful attempts were made to reach the goal by narrow outflanking manoeuvres. Then in April Grant resorted to a wide indirect approach which has a likeness, not merely in its audacity, to Wolfe's final bid for Quebec. Part of the Federal fleet and transports ran southward past the Vicksburg batteries by night to a point thirty miles below the fortress. The bulk of the army moved thither overland by the west bank of the Mississippi, and under cover of Sherman's distracting movements towards the north-east of Vicksburg, it was transported to the east bank in face of weak opposition. Then, when Sherman rejoined him, Grant took the calculated risk of cutting himself loose from his new temporary base and moving north-eastward into the enemy's territory to place himself on the rear of Vicksburg and astride its communications with the main Eastern states of the Confederacy, having made almost a complete circuit from his starting-point. He thus appeared to place himself midway between the enemy's two jaws—their forces concentrating respectively at Vicksburg and at Jackson, forty miles east, the junction of a lateral north and south railway with the main east and

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west line. But in reality he dislocated the action of these jaws. It is worth while to note that on arriving at this railway he found it advisable first to move his whole army eastward to compel the enemy to evacuate Jackson, an illustration of the change in strategical conditions brought about by the development of railways. For while Napoleon had used the line of a river or range of hills as his strategic barrage, Grant's strategic barrage was constituted by the possession of a single point—a railway junction. This secured, he then turned about and moved on Vicksburg, which was now isolated, and remained isolated long enough to ensure its capitulation seven weeks later. The strategic sequel was the opening of the Chattanooga gateway into Georgia, the granary of the Confederacy, and thence into the Eastern states as a whole.

Defeat was now hardly avoidable by the Confederacy. Yet the Federals almost forfeited the victory already ensured. For in 1864, with the north growing weary under the strain, the moral element became preponderant. The peace party was being daily swelled from the ranks of the war-weary, the presidential election was due in November, and unless Lincoln was to be supplanted by a president pledged to seek a compromise peace, a solid guarantee of early victory must be forthcoming. To this end Grant was summoned from the west to take over the supreme command. How did he seek to gain the required early victory? By the strategy which good orthodox soldiers always adopt—that of using his immensely superior weight to smash the opposing army, or at least to wear it down by a "continuous hammering." We have seen that in the Vicksburg campaign he had only adopted the extreme indirect approach after more direct

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approaches had failed. He had then brought it off with masterly skill, but the underlying lesson had not apparently impressed itself on his mind.

Now, in supreme command, he was true to his nature. He decided on the old direct overland approach southward from the Rappahannock towards Richmond. But with a certain difference of aim—for the enemy's army rather than the enemy's capital was his real objective. He directed his subordinate, Meade, that "wherever Lee goes, there you will go too," and in justice to Grant it should also be noted that if his approach was direct in the broad sense, it was in no sense a mere frontal push. Indeed, he continuously sought to turn his enemy's flanks by manoeuvre, if of a narrow radius. Further, he fulfilled all the good military precepts of keeping his army well concentrated and of maintaining his objective undeterred by alarms elsewhere. Even a Foch could not have surpassed his "will to victory." And those who practised his method in 1914-1918 might justly envy him the generous support given and unfailing confidence shown by his political chief. Surely the conditions were ideal for the orthodox strategy of direct approach in its best manner?

Yet by the end of the summer of 1864 the ripe fruit of victory had withered in the hands of the north. The Federals had almost reached the end of their endurance, and Lincoln despaired of re-election—a sorry repayment for the blank cheque he had given his military executant. It is an ironical reflection that the determination with which Grant had wielded his superior weight, now fearfully shrunk after the fierce battles of the Wilderness and Cold Harbour, had utterly failed to crush the enemy's

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army, while the chief result—the geographical advantage of having worked round close to the rear of Richmond—was gained by the bloodless manoeuvres which had punctuated his advance. He had thus the modified satisfaction of being back, after immense loss, in the position which McClellan had occupied in 1862. But when the sky looked blackest it suddenly lightened. At the November elections Lincoln was returned to power. What factor came to the rescue and averted the probability that McClellan, the nominee of the peace-desiring democratic party, would replace him? Not Grant's campaign which made practically no progress between July and December, and definitely petered out with a costly double failure in mid-October. By the verdict of historians, Sherman's capture of Atlanta in September was the instrument of salvation.

When Grant had been called to the supreme command, Sherman, who had played no small part in his Vicksburg success, had succeeded him in the chief command in the west. Between the two there was a contrast of outlook. While Grant's primary objective was the enemy's army, Sherman's was the seizure of strategic points. Atlanta, the base of the enemy army opposing him, was not only the junction of four important railways, but the source of vital supplies. As Sherman pointed out, it was "full of foundries, arsenals and machine shops," besides being a moral symbol, and he held that "its capture would be the death knell of the Confederacy." And he sought to strike it by manoeuvre, as far as possible, rather than battle—deeply imbued with the idea of success at the cheapest possible price. Whatever divergence of opinion may exist as to the respective merits of Grant's objective and Sher-

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man's, it is obvious that the latter is better suited to the psychology of a democracy. Perhaps only an absolute ruler, firmly in the saddle, can hope to maintain unswervingly the military ideal of the "armed forces" objective, although even he will be wise to adjust it to the realities of the situation and to weigh well the prospects of fulfilling it. But the strategist who is the servant of a democratic government has less rein. Dependent on the support and confidence of his employers, he has to work with a narrower margin of time and cost than the "absolute" strategist, and is more pressed for quick profits. Whatever the ultimate prospects he cannot afford to postpone dividends too long. Hence it may be necessary for him to swerve aside temporarily from his objective or at least to give it a new guise by changing his line of operations. Faced with these inevitable handicaps, it is apt for us to ask whether military theory should not be more ready to reconcile its ideals with the inconvenient reality that its military effort rests on a popular foundation—that for the supply of men and munitions, and even for the chance of continuing to fight at all, it depends on the consent of the "man in the street." He who pays the piper calls the tune, and strategists might be better paid in kind if they attuned their strategy, so far as is rightly possible, to the popular ear.

Sherman's economy of force by manoeuvre is the more notable because, compared to Grant in Virginia, he was practically tied to one line of railway for his supplies. Yet, rather than commit his troops to a direct attack he cut loose temporarily even from this. Only once in all these weeks of manoeuvre did he permit a frontal attack, at Kenesaw Mountain, and it is as significant that he did it

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to save his troops from the strain of a further flank march over rain-swamped roads as that it suffered a repulse—which was mitigated because the attack was stopped immediately after the first check. This, indeed, was the only occasion during the whole 130 mile advance through mountainous and river-intersected country that Sherman committed his troops to an offensive battle. Indeed, he manoeuvred so skilfully as to lure the Confederates time after time into vain attacks. Thus to force an opponent acting on the strategic defensive into a succession of costly tactical offensives was a triumph of strategic artistry unparalleled in history. And all the more meritorious because of the way Sherman was tied to a single line of communications. Even from the narrowest military criterion, ignoring its immense moral and economic effect, it was a great feat, for Sherman inflicted more casualties than he suffered, not merely relatively but actually—in "striking" comparison with Grant in Virginia. Atlanta gained, Sherman took a risk greater than ever before, and for which he has been much criticised by military commentators. He was convinced that if he could march through and ruin the railway systems of Georgia, the "granary of the south," and then the Carolinas, the moral impression of this invasion of the heart of the south and the stoppage of supplies going north to Richmond and Lee's army, would cause the collapse of the Confederates' resistance. Hence, ignoring Hood's army, which he had forced to evacuate Atlanta, he began his famous "march to the sea" through Georgia, living on the country while he destroyed the railways. On November 15, 1864, he left Atlanta; on December 10 he reached the outskirts of Savannah and there reopened his communications, this

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time by sea, as well as depriving the south of its chief remaining ports. Then he moved northwards through the Carolinas towards Lee's rear. Not until over three months later, the beginning of April, did Grant resume his advance. This obtained a dramatic success, and the surrender of Richmond was followed within a week by the surrender of Lee's army. Superficially it was a triumphant vindication for Grant's direct strategy and "battle" objective. But for a serious judgment the time factor is all-important. The collapse of the Confederate resistance was due to the emptiness of its stomach reacting on its morale. The indirect approach to the enemy's economic and moral rear had proved as decisive in the ultimate phase as it had been in the successive steps by which that decision was prepared in the west. The truth comes home to anyone who undertakes a careful and comprehensive study of the war. It was appreciated more than twenty years ago by the present official historian of the World War, General Edmonds, whose verdict was that "The military genius of the great Confederate leaders, Lee and Jackson, the unrivalled fighting capacity of the Army of Northern Virginia, and the close proximity of the rival capitals, have caused a disproportionate attention to be concentrated upon the eastern theatre of war. It was in the west that the decisive blows were struck. The capture of Vicksburg and Port Hudson in July 1863 was the real turning-point of the war, and it was the operations of Sherman's grand army of the west which really led to the collapse of the Confederacy at "Appomattox Court House"—the site of Lee's surrender in the east.

The disproportionate attention may be traced partly to

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the glamour of battle which hypnotises the normal soldier-student of history, and partly to the spell cast by Henderson's epic "Stonewall Jackson"—perhaps more epic than history. Its own military value is scarcely reduced, nay even enriched, through embodying more perhaps of Henderson's conception of war than of Jackson's execution. But by its very brilliance it focussed the attention of British military students on the campaigns in Virginia, to the neglect of the western theatres, where the decisive acts took place. As the historian of 1914-1918, General Edmonds might render a service to future generations if he analysed the effect of this "disproportionate attention," not merely one-sided but fallacious, upon British military thought before 1914 and British strategy subsequently.

When we pass from the American Civil War to the wars in Europe which followed on its heels we are impressed above all by the sharpness of its contrasts. The first contrast is that in 1866 and 1870 both sides were nominally at least prepared for the conflict; the second, that the contestants were professional armies; the third, that the opposing higher commands compiled a catalogue of mistakes and miscalculations unapproached by the higher leading in the American Civil War; the fourth, that the strategy adopted on both sides in both wars was essentially lacking in art; the fifth, that despite this the issue was quickly decided. Moltke's strategy was essentially that of a direct approach, with little trace of guile, relying on the sheer smashing power of a superior concentration of force. Are we to conclude that these two wars are the proverbial exceptions which prove the rule? They are certainly exceptions, but hardly excep-

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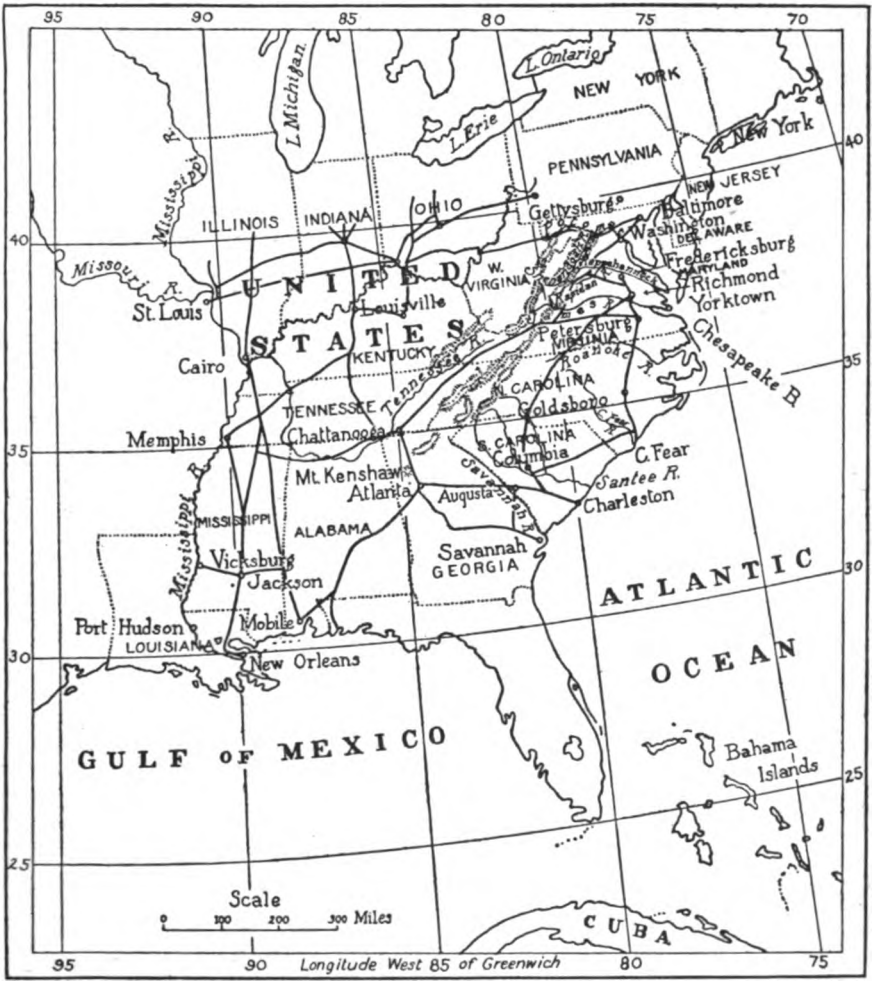
THE UNITED STATES IN 1861

Showing Principal Railways



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tions to the rule that has emerged from the long list of cases already examined. For in none of them were inferiority of force and stupidity of mind both in the scales of the defeated side, weighing it down from the outset. One or other have frequently been seen, but never a full load of both. In 1866 the Austrians' inferiority of force rested primarily in the fact of having an inferior weapon—for the Prussians' breech-loading rifle gave them an advantage over the Austrians' muzzle loader, which the battlefield amply proved, even if the next generation of academic military thought tended to overlook it. In 1870 the French inferiority of force lay partly in inferior numbers and partly, as in 1866, in inferior training. These double conditions are more than adequate to explain the decisiveness of the Austrian defeat in 1866, and still more the French defeat in 1870, in face of a direct approach. The real lesson from these examples is not that the strategic approach here seen was the exception to the rule, but that the exception to previous experience lay in the conditions. They were certainly exceptional, and in discussion or preparation for war no soldier would venture to base his plans on the supposition that his enemy would be as weak in brain and body as the Austrians in 1866 and the French in 1870. Yet, in actual fact, the war plans evolved and accepted by the several General Staffs in 1914 were based on a direct approach. Hence, however incredible, the only possible deduction is that they subconsciously assumed that the conditions of 1870 were normal and not exceptional.

At the same time, before dismissing these instances it is worth pointing out that the German strategy although direct in intention was less so in fulfilment. In 1866 the

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need to save time by using all available railways led Moltke to detrain the Prussian forces on a widely extended front of over 250 miles. His intention was, by a rapid advance, converging inward, through the frontier mountain belt, to unite his armies in northern Bohemia. But the loss of time due to the King of Prussia's reluctance to appear the aggressor frustrated his intention, and thereby ironically endowed his strategy with an indirectness of approach that he had not intended. For the Austrian Army concentrated and pushed forward in the interval, and thus deprived Moltke of his desired concentration area. And the Prussian Crown Prince, believing that the salient province of Silesia was menaced, wrung from Moltke a reluctant sanction to move his II army south-eastwards to safeguard Silesia. Thereby he separated himself more from the other armies and thereby also, moving along the upper stroke of an L—put himself in a position to menace the flank and rear of the Austrian mass. Pedants have spilled much ink in condemning Moltke for sanctioning this wide extension; in reality it had in it the seeds of decisive victory, even though he had not sown them deliberately.

This juxtaposition so disturbed the mental equilibrium of the Austrian command that the Prussians, despite a prodigal series of blunders, were able, first to get through the mountains on both sides, and then to reap the harvest at Königgrätz—where more blunders contributed to the indirectness, and hence the decisiveness of their approach. But the Austrian commander was beaten before the battle opened: he had telegraphed to his Emperor urging an immediate peace.

In 1870 Moltke had intended to bring about a decisive

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battle on the Saar, in which all his three armies would concentrate on and pulverise the French. This plan was upset, not by the enemy's action but by his paralysis! And this paralysis was caused by the mere news that the German III Army on the extreme left had crossed the frontier far to the east and won a minor tactical success over a French detachment at Weissenburg. In the outcome, the indirect effect of this petty engagement was more decisive than the intended great battle would probably have been. For instead of being wheeled inwards to augment the main mass, the III Army was allowed to pursue a tranquil course well to the east and outside the zone of the main opposing armies. Thus it took no part in the blundering battles of Vionville and Gravelotte—the position of the French was such that it could hardly have taken an effective part if it had been nearer—and thereby became the vital factor in the next and decisive phase. For when the French main army—rather stimulated than depressed by the result of Gravelotte—fell back to a flank into Metz, it might easily have slipped away from the exhausted German I and II armies; but the likelihood of interception by the III army was an inducement to Bazaine to stay securely in Metz. Thus the Germans had time to recover cohesion; the French time to lose it, in the inactivity which followed their abandonment of the open field. And in consequence, MacMahon was enticed, or, rather, politically pressed, into his ill-advised and worse-conducted move to the relief of Metz. Thus, unintended and unforeseen, was created the opportunity for the III Army, still marching "free," towards Paris, to make an indirect approach to MacMahon's army. Making a complete change of direction

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from westward to northward, it moved down on the flank and rear of MacMahon, and the result was—Sedan. Even the most obvious of direct approach wars had more indirectness in the decisive phase than appears superficially. But it is the superficial, and not the underlying deduction whose influence is to be traced in the mass of military theorising which followed 1870. And this influence dominated the next large-scale war—the Russo-Japanese. For the Japanese strategy, slavishly following its German mentors, is purely that of a direct approach. There is no real attempt to take advantage of the unusually advantageous condition that the Russian war-effort is entirely dependent on a single line of railway—the Trans-Siberian. Never in all history has an army drawn breath through so long and narrow a windpipe, and the very size of its body makes its breathing more difficult. But all that Japan's strategists contemplate is a direct blow at and into the teeth of the Russian army, and they hold their own forces more closely grouped than Moltke in 1870. It is true that they attempt a certain convergence of approach before Liao-Yang, and subsequently, on making contact, seek to outflank their opponent repeatedly; but if these outflanking movements look comparatively wide on the map they are extemely narrow in proportion to the scale of the forces. Although they have no "free" III army as was Moltke's fortune, no unintended bait such as Metz, and no MacMahon to swallow it—for they have swallowed their own bait in taking Port Arthur—they expect a Sedan. Instead, they have abundant indecisive bloodshed. As a result, they are so exhausted after the final indecisive battle of Mukden that they are glad, and lucky, to make peace with a foe who has no heart in the

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struggle and has not yet put one-tenth of his available forces into it.

This analysis of history is concerned with facts and not with conjectures, with what was done, and its result, not with what might have been done. And the theory of the indirect approach which has evolved from it must rest on the concrete evidence of actual experience that the direct approach is indecisive, and is in no way affected by arguments for or against the difficulties of making an indirect approach in a particular case. From the standpoint of this fundamental thesis it is irrelevant to enquire whether a general could have taken or could have done better by taking a different course.

But from the standpoint of general military knowledge speculation is always of interest and oft-times of value. So, diverging from the real path of this study, one may take account of the handicaps which the Japanese suffered in the scanty communications and difficult country of Korea and Manchuria, and yet point out the potential parallel between Port Arthur and Mantua. If conditions were harder in some ways, they were more advantageous in others, and the instrument better. Thus one may ask whether in the earlier phase of the war Japanese strategy might not have exploited the bait of Port Arthur in the subtle way Bonaparte exploited Mantua. And in the later phase was there not scope for using at least a proportion of force against the slender wind-pipe between Harbin and Mukden ?

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

OUR survey has covered the nine wars which decisively affected the course of European history in ancient times, and the eighteen major wars of modern history—counting as one the struggle against Napoleon which, temporarily damped down in one place, burst out afresh in another with no real intermission. These twenty-seven wars embraced more than 240 campaigns. In only six of these campaigns—those which culminated at Issus, Gaugamela, Friedland, Wagram, Sadowa and Sedan—was a decisive result obtained by a direct strategic approach to the main army of the enemy! And in the first two Alexander's strategic direct approach was not only prepared by a grand strategy of indirect approach, which had seriously shaken the Persian empire and its adherents' confidence, but was guaranteed by the possession of a tactical instrument of incalculably superior quality, and executed by a tactical indirect approach. In the second two Napoleon had begun both by essaying an indirect approach, and his resort to the direct was due in part to his impatience and in part to his confidence in the superiority of his instrument. This superiority rested on his use of massed artillery, and at both Friedland and Wagram the decision was primarily due to this new tactical method. But the price paid for these successes and its effect on Napoleon's own fortune do not encourage a resort to similar directness even with a similar tactical superiority. As for 1866 and

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1870, we have already seen that although both campaigns were conceived as direct approaches, they acquired an unintended indirectness—which was reinforced by the Germans' tactical superiority in each case—the breech-loader in 1866 and numbers in 1870. These six campaigns are, surely, slender justifications for the complaisant adoption of a direct strategy by anyone entitled to be called a general? Yet throughout history the direct approach has always been the normal form of strategy, and a purposeful indirect approach the rare exception. Few generals, indeed, even among the famous, have ever adopted the latter as their initial strategy. More often as a last resource, even a last gamble. Yet it has brought them a decision where the direct approach had brought them failure, and thereby left them in a gravely weakened condition to attempt the indirect. A decisive success obtained in such deteriorated conditions acquires all the greater significance.

Our survey has revealed twenty-six campaigns in which both the decisiveness and the indirectness of approach are manifest beyond dispute. They are those of Lysander in the Aegean, 405 B.C., Epaminondas in the Peloponnese, 362 B.C., Philip in Boeotia, 338 B.C., Alexander on the Hydaspes, Cassander and Lysimachus in the Near East, 302 B.C., Hannibal's Trasimene campaign in Etruria, Scipio's Utica and Zama campaigns in Africa, Caesar's Ilerda campaign in Spain, and, in modern history, Cromwell's Preston, Dunbar and Worcester campaigns, Turenne's Alsace campaign of 1674-75, Eugene's Italian campaign of 1701, Marlborough's Flanders campaign of 1708 and Villars's of 1712, Wolfe's Quebec campaign, Jourdan's Moselle-Meuse campaign of 1794, the Arch-

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duke Charles's Rhine-Danube campaign of 1796, Bonaparte's Italian campaigns of 1796, 1797 and 1800; his Ulm and Austerlitz campaigns of 1805; Grant's Vicksburg and Sherman's Atlanta campaigns. These all turned the balance of their respective wars. In addition, the survey brought out numerous "border-line" examples in which either the indirectness or its effect are less clearly established.

This high proportion of history's decisive campaigns, enhanced as it is by the comparative rarity of the indirect approach, enforces the conclusion that the indirect approach is by far the most hopeful and economic form of strategy. Can we draw still stronger and more definite deductions from history? Yes. That with the exception of Alexander, the consistently successful great commanders of history, when faced by an enemy in a position strong naturally or materially, have hardly ever attacked it directly. That if, under pressure of circumstances, they have reluctantly risked a direct attack, the result has been to blot their record with a rare failure. Marlborough only once diverged seriously from the path of indirectness and thereby undid the results of years of success. Caesar several times, and suffered in proportion. Scipio and Cromwell never, and they were the only ever victorious great Captains, apart from Alexander. And even the latter, despite an incalculably superior instrument, invariably applied it by a tactical indirect approach.

Further, history shows that rather than resign himself to a direct approach, a Great Captain will take even the most hazardous indirect approach—if necessary over mountains, deserts or swamps, with only a fraction of force, even cutting himself loose from his communications.

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Facing, in fact, every unfavourable condition rather than accept the stalemate which a direct approach would involve. Natural hazards, however formidable, are inherently less dangerous and less uncertain than fighting hazards. All conditions are more calculable, all obstacles more surmountable, than those of human resistance. By reasoned calculation and preparation they can be overcome almost "to time-table." But while Napoleon could cross the Alps "according to plan," the little fort of Bard could interfere so seriously with the movement of his army as to endanger his whole plan.

Turning now to reverse the sequence of our examination, and surveying in turn the decisive battles of history, we find that in almost all the victor had his opponent at a psychological disadvantage before the clash took place. Examples are Marathon, Salamis, Aegospotamoi, Man[illegible]amela (through grand strategy), [illegible], Trasimene, Cannae, Metaurus, [illegible], Worcester, Blenheim, Oudenarde, Denain, Quebec, Fleurus, Rivoli, Austerlitz, Jena, Vicksburg, Königgrätz, Sedan.

Combining the strategical and the tactical examination, we find that most of the examples fall into one of two categories, that they are either produced by a strategy of elastic defence—calculated retirement—capped by a tactical offensive, or by a strategy of offence, aimed to place oneself in a position "upsetting" to the opponent, and capped by a tactical defensive. Either compound forms an indirect approach, and the psychological basis of both can be expressed in the one word "lure." Indeed, it might even be said, in a deeper and wider sense than Clausewitz implied, that the defensive is the strongest as

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well as the most economical form of strategy. For the second compound, although superficially and logistically an offensive move, has for its underlying motive to draw the opponent into an " unbalanced " offensive.

In history the indirect approach has normally consisted of a logistical military move directed against an economic target—the source of supply of either the opposing state or army. Occasionally, however, the move itself has been economic.

A further deduction, perhaps not positive but at least suggestive, from our survey, is that in a campaign against more than one state or army it is more fruitful to concentrate first against the weaker partner than to attempt the overthrow of the stronger in the belief that the latter's defeat will automatically involve the collapse of the others.

In the two outstanding struggles of the ancient world—the overthrow of Persia by Alexander and of Carthage by Scipio—both followed upon the severing of the roots. And this grand strategy of indirect approach not only gave birth to the Macedonian and Rom[illegible] the greatest of their successors, the [illegible] on it was founded the fortunes [illegible] Napoleon Bonaparte. Later still on this foundation arose the great and solid structure of the United States.

The art of the indirect approach can only be mastered, and its full scope appreciated, by study of and reflection upon the whole history of war. But we can at least crystallise the lessons into two simple maxims, one negative, the other positive. The first is that in face of the overwhelming evidence of history no general is justified in launching his troops to a direct attack upon an enemy firmly in position. The second, that instead of seeking to

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upset the enemy's equilibrium by one's attack, it must be upset before a real attack is, or can be successfully, launched.

Lenin had a vision of fundamental truth when he said that " the soundest strategy in war is to postpone operations until the moral disintegration of the enemy renders the delivery of the mortal blow both possible and easy." This is not always practicable, nor his method of propaganda always fruitful. But it will bear adaptation— " The soundest strategy in any campaign is to postpone battle, and the soundest tactics to postpone attack, until the moral dislocation of the enemy renders the delivery of a decisive blow practicable."

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CHAPTER X

CONSTRUCTION

HAVING drawn our conclusions from an analysis of history, it seems advantageous to construct on the fresh foundations a new dwelling house for strategic thought.

Let us first be clear as to what is strategy. Clausewitz, in his monumental work "On War" defined it as "the art of the employment of battles as a means to gain the object of war. In other words, strategy forms the plan of the war, maps out the proposed course of the different campaigns which compose the war, and regulates the battles to be fought in each."

One defect of this definition is that it intrudes on the sphere of policy, or the higher conduct of the war, which must necessarily be the responsibility of the government and not of the military leaders it employs as its agents in the executive control of operations. Another defect is that it narrows the meaning of "strategy" to the pure utilisation of battle, thus conveying the idea that battle is the only means to the strategical end. It was an easy step for his less profound disciples to confuse the means with the end and to reach the conclusion that in war every other consideration should be subordinated to the aim of fighting a decisive battle.

Relation to Policy.—To break down the distinction between strategy and policy would not matter much if the two functions were normally combined in the same person, as with a Frederick or a Napoleon. But as such autocratic

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soldier-rulers have always been rare, and became extinct in the 19th century, the effect was insidiously harmful. For it encouraged soldiers to make the preposterous claim that policy should be subservient to their conduct of operations and, especially in democratic countries, it drew the statesman on to overstep the indefinite border of his sphere and interfere with his military employee in the actual use of his tools.

Moltke reached a clearer, and wiser, definition in terming strategy " the practical adaptation of the means placed at a general's disposal to the attainment of the object in view." This definition fixes the responsibility of a military commander to the government by which he is employed. His responsibility is that of expending most profitably to the interest of the higher war policy the force allotted to him within the theatre of operations assigned to him. If he considers that the force allotted is inadequate for the task indicated he is justified in pointing this out, and if his opinion is overruled he can refuse or resign the command, but he exceeds his rightful sphere if he attempts to dictate to the government what measure of force should be placed at his disposal.

On the other hand the government, which formulates war policy, and adapts it to conditions which often change as a war progresses, can rightly intervene in the strategy of a campaign not merely by replacing a commander in whom it has lost confidence but by modifying his object according to the needs of its war policy. While it should not interfere with him in the handling of his tools it should indicate clearly the nature of his task. Thus strategy has not necessarily the simple object of seeking to overthrow the enemy's military power. When a government appre-

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ciates that the enemy has the military superiority either in general or in a particular theatre, it may wisely enjoin a strategy of limited aim. It may desire to wait until the balance of force can be changed by the intervention of allies or by the transfer of forces from another theatre. It may desire to wait, or even to limit its military effort permanently, while economic or naval action decides the issue. It may calculate that the overthrow of the enemy's military power is a task definitely beyond its capacity, or not worth the effort, and that the object of its war policy can be assured by seizing territory which it can either retain or use as bargaining counters when peace is negotiated. Such a policy has more support from history than military opinion hitherto has recognised, and is less inherently a policy of weakness than its apologists imply. It is, indeed, bound up with the history of the British Empire and has repeatedly proved a lifebuoy to Britain's allies, and a permanent benefit to herself. However unconsciously followed, there is ground for enquiry whether this military policy does not deserve to be accorded a place in the theory of the conduct of war.

But the more usual reason for adopting a strategy of limited aim is that of awaiting a change in the balance of force, a change often sought and achieved by draining the enemy's force, weakening him by pricks instead of risking blows. The essential condition of such a strategy is that the drain on him is disproportionately greater than on oneself. The object may be sought by raiding his supplies, by local attacks which annihilate or inflict disproportionate loss on parts of his force, by luring him into unprofitable attacks, by causing an excessively wide distribution of his force and, not least, by exhausting his moral and physical energy.

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This closer definition sheds light on the question, previously raised, of a general's independence in carrying out his own strategy inside his theatre of operations. For if the government has decided upon a "Fabian" war policy, the general who, even within his strategic sphere, seeks to overthrow the enemy's military power may do more harm than good to the government's war policy. Usually a war policy of limited aim imposes a strategy of limited aim, and a decisive aim should only be adopted with the approval of the government, which alone can decide whether it is "worth the candle."

We can now crystallise our thought into a shorter, simpler, and perhaps more exact definition of strategy as—"the distribution and transmission of military means to fulfil the ends of policy." For strategy is concerned not merely with the movements of armies—as its rôle is often defined—but with the effect. When the application of the military instrument merges into actual fighting, the dispositions for and control of such direct action are termed "tactics." The two categories, however, although convenient for discussion, can never be truly divided into separate compartments, because each not only influences but merges into the other.

As tactics is an application of strategy on a lower plane, so strategy is an application on a lower plane of "grand strategy." If practically synonymous with the policy which governs the conduct of war, as distinct from the permanent policy which formulates its object, the term "grand strategy" serves to bring out the sense of "policy in execution." For the rôle of grand strategy is to co-ordinate and direct all the resources of a nation towards the attainment of the political object of the war—the goal

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defined by national policy. Grand strategy should both calculate and develop the economic resources and manpower of the nation in order to sustain the fighting services. So also with the moral resources, for to foster and fortify the will to win and to endure is as important as to possess the more concrete forms of power. And it should regulate the distribution of power between the several services and between the services and industry. Nor is this all, for fighting power is but one of the instruments of grand strategy. It should take account of and apply the power of financial pressure, diplomatic pressure, commercial pressure, and, not least, ethical pressure to weaken the opponent's will. A good cause is a sword as well as a buckler. Furthermore, while the horizon of strategy is bounded by the war, grand strategy looks beyond the war to the subsequent peace. It should not only combine the various instruments, but so regulate their use as to avoid damage to the future state of peacefulness, secure and prosperous. Little wonder that, unlike strategy, the realm of grand strategy is for the most part *terra incognita !*

Pure Strategy.—Having cleared the ground, we can build up our conception of strategy on its original and true basis—that of " the art of the general." This depends for success, first and most, on a sound calculation and co-ordination of the end and the means. The end must be proportioned to the total means, and the means used in gaining each intermediate end which contributes to the ultimate must be proportioned to the value and needs of that intermediate end, whether it be to gain an objective or to fulfil a contributory purpose. An excess may be as harmful as a deficiency. A true adjustment would estab-

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lish a perfect economy of force, in the deeper sense of that oft-distorted military term. But, because of the nature and uncertainty of war, an uncertainty aggravated by its unscientific study, a true adjustment is beyond the power of military genius even, and success lies in the closest approximation to truth.

This relativity is inherent, because, however our knowledge of the science of war, at present an almost unexplored region, be extended, war is a science which depends on art for its application. Art can not only bring the end nearer to the means, but by giving a higher value to the means enables the end to be extended. This complicates calculation, because no man can exactly calculate the capacity of human genius and stupidity nor the incapacity of will.

Elements and Conditions.—Nevertheless, in strategy calculation is simpler and a closer approximation to truth possible than in tactics. For in war the chief incalculable is the human will, which manifests itself in resistance, which in turn lies in the province of tactics. Strategy has not to overcome resistance, except from nature. Its purpose is to diminish the possibility of resistance, and it seeks to fulfil this purpose by exploiting the elements of *movement* and *surprise*. Movement lies in the physical sphere and depends on a calculation of the conditions of time, topography, and transport capacity. By transport capacity one implies both the means by which, and the measure in which, force can be both moved and maintained.

Surprise lies in the psychological sphere and depends on a calculation, far more difficult than in the physical sphere, of the manifold conditions, varying in each case, which are likely to affect the will of the opponent.

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Although strategy may aim more at exploiting movement than at exploiting surprise, or conversely, yet the two elements react on each other. Movement generates surprise, and surprise gives impetus to movement. For a movement which is accelerated or changes its direction inevitably carries with it a degree of surprise, even though it be unconcealed; while surprise smooths the path of movement by hindering the enemy's counter-measures and counter-movements.

As regards the relation of strategy to tactics, while in execution the borderline is often shadowy, and it is difficult to decide exactly where a strategical movement ends and a tactical movement begins, yet in conception the two are distinct. Tactics lies in and fills the province of fighting. Strategy not only stops on the frontier, but has for its purpose the reduction of fighting to the slenderest possible proportions.

Aim of Strategy.—This statement may be disputed by those who conceive the destruction of the enemy's armed force as the only sound aim in war, who hold that the only goal of strategy is battle, and who are obsessed with the Clausewitzian saying that "blood is the price of victory." Yet if one should concede this point and meet its advocates on their own ground, the statement would remain unshaken. For even if a decisive battle be the only goal, all recognise that the object of strategy is to bring about this battle under the most advantageous circumstances. And the more advantageous the circumstances, the less proportionately will be the fighting.

The perfection of strategy would, therefore, be to produce a decision—the destruction of the enemy's armed forces through their unarming by surrender—without any

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fighting. History, as we have seen, provides examples where strategy, helped by favourable conditions, has practically produced such a result.

It rests normally with the government, responsible for the grand strategy of a war, to decide whether strategy should make its contribution by achieving a military decision or otherwise. And just as the military is but one of the means to the end of grand strategy—one of the instruments in the surgeon's case—so battle is but one of the means to the end of strategy. If the conditions are suitable, it is usually the quickest in effect, but if the conditions are unfavourable it is folly to use it. Let us assume that a strategist is empowered to seek a military decision. His responsibility is to seek it under the most advantageous circumstances in order to produce the most profitable result. Hence his true aim is not so much to seek battle as to seek a strategic situation so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by a battle is guaranteed to do so. In other words, dislocation is the aim of strategy; its sequel may either be the enemy's dissolution or his disruption in battle. Dissolution may involve some partial measure of fighting, but this has not the character of a battle.

Action of Strategy.—How is the strategic dislocation produced? In the physical, or "logistical," sphere it is the result of a move which (*a*) upsets the enemy's dispositions and by compelling a sudden "change of front" dislocates the distribution and organisation of his forces; (*b*) separates his forces; (*c*) endangers his supplies; (*d*) menaces the route or routes by which he could retreat in case of need and re-establish himself in his base or homeland. A dislocation may be produced by one of these

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effects, but is more often the consequence of several. Differentiation, indeed, is difficult, because a move directed towards the enemy's rear tends to combine these effects. Their respective influence, however, varies and has varied throughout history according to the size of armies and the complexity of their organisation. With armies which "live on the country," drawing their supplies locally by plunder or requisition, the line of communication has negligible importance. Even in a higher stage of development, a small force has less dependence on the line of communication and enables supplies to be transported with it for limited periods. The larger an army and the more complex its organisation the more prompt and serious in effect is a menace to its line of communication.

Where armies have not been so dependent, strategy has been correspondingly handicapped, and the tactical issue of battle has played a greater part. Nevertheless, even thus handicapped, strategic artists have frequently gained a decisive advantage previous to battle by menacing the enemy's line of retreat, the equilibrium of his dispositions, or his local supplies.

To be effective such a menace must usually be applied at a point closer, in time and space, to the enemy's army than a menace to his communications, and thus in early warfare it is often difficult to distinguish between the strategical and tactical manoeuvre.

In the psychological sphere dislocation is the result of the impression on the commander's mind of the physical effects which we have listed. The impression is strongly accentuated if his realisation of his being at a disadvantage is sudden, and if he feels that he is unable to counter the enemy's move. Psychological dislocation, indeed, funda-

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mentally springs from this sense of being trapped. This is the reason why it has most frequently followed a physical move on to the enemy's rear. An army like a man cannot properly defend its back from a blow without turning round to use its arms in the new direction. "Turning" temporarily unbalances an army as it does a man, and with the former the period of instability is inevitably much longer. In consequence, the brain is much more sensitive to any menace to its back. In contrast, to move directly on an opponent is to consolidate his equilibrium, physical and psychological, and by consolidating it to augment his resisting power. For in the case of an army it rolls the enemy back towards their reserves, supplies, and reinforcements, so that as the original front is worn thin new layers are added to the back. And, at best, it imposes a strain rather than producing a jar.

Thus a move round the enemy's front against his rear has the aim not only of avoiding resistance on its way but in its issue. In the profoundest sense, it takes the line of least resistance. The equivalent in the psychological sphere is the line of least expectation. They are the two faces of the same coin, and to appreciate this is to widen our understanding of strategy. For if we merely take what obviously appears the line of least resistance, its obviousness will appeal to the opponent also and this line may no longer be that of least resistance. In studying the physical aspect we must never lose sight of the psychological, and only when both are combined is the strategy truly an indirect approach, calculated to dislocate the opponent's equilibrium.

Thus we see that the mere fact of marching indirectly towards the enemy and on to the rear of his dispositions

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does not constitute a strategic indirect approach. Strategic art is not so simple. Such an approach may start by being indirect in relation to the enemy's front, but by the very directness of its progress towards his rear may allow him to change his dispositions so that it soon becomes a direct approach to his new front.

Because of the risk that the enemy may achieve such a change of front, it is usual, and usually necessary, for the dislocating move to be preceded by a move or moves, which can perhaps best be classified under the term " distract " in its literal sense of " to draw asunder." The purpose of this " distraction " is to deprive the enemy of his freedom of action, and it should operate in both the physical and psychological spheres. In the physical, by causing a distension of his forces or their diversion to unprofitable ends, so that they are too widely distributed and too committed elsewhere to have the power of interfering with one's own decisively intended move. In the psychological sphere the same effect is sought by playing upon the fears of and by deceiving the opposing command. " Stonewall " Jackson realised this when he framed his strategical motto—" Mystify, mislead, and surprise." For to mystify and to mislead constitutes " distraction," and surprise is the essential cause of " dislocation." And it is through the " distraction " of the commander's mind that the distraction of his forces follows. The loss of his freedom of action is the sequel to the loss of his freedom of conception.

A more profound appreciation of how the psychological permeates and dominates the physical sphere has an indirect value. For it warns us of the fallacy and shallowness of attempting to analyse and theorise about strategy in

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terms of mathematics. To treat it quantitatively, as if the issue turned merely on a superior concentration of force at a selected place is as faulty as to treat it geometrically as a question of lines and angles.

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PART II

THE WORLD WAR OF 1914-1918

FOREWORD

WHEN this book was first drafted I abstained from including any analysis of the war of 1914-18, feeling that although ample material was now available, from archives and personal evidence, the atmosphere was still too heated by public controversy and personal interests to allow a dispassionate reception of any arbitration. I was anxious that what I believe to be vital and true lessons distilled from the past for the future should not be impaired by such an atmosphere. My aim is to stimulate not controversy but a scientific spirit of enquiry.

Moreover, I did not feel that a detailed examination of such recent history was necessary to my purpose. This had been to use the glass of past history—an amalgam from the experience of both the ancient and the modern world—to form a microscope through which the reader could himself discover the lessons of 1914-18. And the power of its lenses seemed sufficiently strong to enable him to perceive these lessons clearly.

But friendly critics to whom I submitted the first draft urged me to include a survey of 1914-18 in order to co-ordinate past with recent experience and on the ground that few students have yet had the leisure and opportunity to sift the mass of historical material. If, in acting on these suggestions, I impinge on any old wounds it will be the

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fault of my treatment and not of the spirit which prompts it. But by confining the exploration to a simple examination of how far the direct and indirect approach respectively were employed, and of the factual consequences, I hope that I may succeed in steering my ship between the shoals of sentiment and prejudice. And to curtail the controversial area the survey will be confined mainly to the realm of strategy, the strategy of the various campaigns, with only a few necessary excursions into the realm of war policy.

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CHAPTER XI

THE PLANS AND THEIR ISSUE IN THE WESTERN THEATRE, 1914

THE starting-point of a survey of the Western Front campaign must be the pre-war plans. The Franco-German frontier was narrow, only some 150 miles long, and so afforded little room for the manoeuvre of the masses which the conscriptive system had created and developed. At the south-eastern end the frontier abutted on Switzerland, and after a short stretch of flat country near Belfort it ran for 70 miles along the Vosges mountains. Thence the line was prolonged by an almost continuous fortress chain based on Epinal, Toul and Verdun, and just beyond the last-named lay the frontiers of Belgium and Luxembourg. In the resurrection and reconstruction period which followed the disasters of 1870 the French plan was that of an initial defensive, based on the frontier fortresses, to be followed by a decisive counterstroke. To this end the great fortress system along the Alsace-Lorraine frontier had been created, and gaps such as the Trouée de Charmes between Epinal and Toul had been left to " canalise " the expected German invasion so that the counter might be delivered with more assurance and effectiveness.

This plan was marked by a certain indirectness of approach, perhaps as much as was possible in view of the restricted frontier and the French conscript masses, and without violating neutral territory.

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But in the decade before 1914 a new school of thought arose, with Colonel de Grandmaison as its prophet, which denounced this plan as contrary to the French spirit and as " an almost complete atrophy of the idea of the offensive." The advocates of the *offensive à outrance* found in Joffre, appointed Chief of the General Staff in 1912, a lever for their intentions. Grasping it, they gained control of the French military machine and, throwing over the old plan, formulated the now famous, or notorious, Plan XVII. This was purely a direct approach in the form of a headlong offensive against the German centre " with all forces united." Yet for this frontal and whole-front offensive the French plan counted upon having a bare equality of strength against an enemy who would have the support of his own fortified frontier zone, while, by rushing forward, the French foreswore any advantage from their own. The one concession to historical experience and common-sense in this plan was that the fortress of Metz should be masked and not directly assaulted, the attack passing south of it into Lorraine and north of it also. The latter wing would extend the offensive into Belgian Luxembourg if the Germans violated neutral territory. By an historical paradox, the French plan drew its inspiration from a German, Clausewitz, while the German plan was far closer to the Napoleonic in origin, if still more Hannibalic.

Britain's contingent share in the French plan was settled less by calculation than by the " Europeanisation " of her military organisation and thought during the previous decade. This continental influence drew her insensibly into a tacit acceptance of the rôle of an appendix to the French left wing, and away from her historic

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exploitation of the mobility given by sea-power. At the council of war on the outbreak, Lord Roberts, summoned from retirement, advocated the despatch of the British expeditionary force to the Belgian coast—where it would have stiffened the Belgian resistance and, by its mere situation, have threatened the rear flank of the German armies as they advanced through Belgium into France. But General Henry Wilson as Director of Military Operations had virtually pledged the General Staff to act in direct co-operation with the French. The informal military negotiations between 1905 and 1914 had paved the way for a reversal of England's centuries old war policy.

This *fait accompli* overbore not only Roberts' strategical idea but Haig's desire to postpone a landing until the situation was clearer, and even Kitchener's more limited objection to assembling the expeditionary force so close to the French and to the frontier.

The revised French plan was the one thing needed to make the original German plan, framed by Graf von Schlieffen in 1905, a true indirect approach. Faced by the blank wall which the French fortified frontier presented, the logical military course was to go round it—through Belgium. Schlieffen decided on this course, and to go as widely as possible. Strangely, the French command, even when in August 1914 Belgium was invaded, could not believe that the Germans would go through by other than the shortest route, south of the Meuse. Schlieffen's plan concentrated the bulk of the German forces on the right wing for this gigantic wheel. The right wing was to sweep through Belgium and northern France and, continuing to traverse a vast arc, would wheel gradually east. With its extreme right

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passing south of Paris and crossing the Seine near Rouen, it would thus press the French back towards the Moselle, where they would be hammered in rear on the anvil formed by the Lorraine fortresses and the Swiss frontier.

But the real subtlety and indirectness of the plan lay not in this geographical detour but in the idea which guided the distribution of force. An initial surprise was sought by incorporating reserve corps with active at the outset in the offensive mass. Of the 72 divisions which would thus be available, 53 were allotted to the swinging mass, ten were to form a pivot facing Verdun, and a mere nine were to form the left wing along the French frontier. This reduction of the left wing to the slenderest possible size was shrewdly calculated to increase the effect of the swinging mass by its very weakness. For if the French, attacking in Lorraine, pressed the left wing back towards the Rhine, it would be difficult for them to parry the German attack through Belgium, and the further they went the more difficult. Like a revolving door, if a man pressed heavily on one side the other side would swing round and strike him in the back, and the more heavily he pressed the severer would be the blow. Geographically, the huge scale of the forces in comparison with the theatre of operations made Schlieffen's move through Belgium a strategic approach of somewhat limited indirectness. Psychologically, his design for and distribution of force on the left wing made it a definitely indirect approach. And the French plan made it perfect. If a ghost can chuckle, how the departed Schlieffen must have chuckled when he saw that the French were not even needing to be enticed on into his trap. But his chuckle must soon have changed into chagrin. For his successor,

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Moltke—" the younger " in name but the older in caution —abandoned Schlieffen's plan in execution as he had already modified and marred it in pre-war preparation.

Between 1905 and 1914, as more troops became available, he increased the strength of the left wing disproportionately to the right. By making it safer it made the plan unsafe, and began a continuous sapping at its foundations which ended in its collapse.

When in August 1914 the French offensive developed Moltke was tempted to accept the challenge in a direct manner and to seek a decision in Lorraine, postponing the right wing's sweep. The impulse was only a momentary one, but in that brief lapse he had diverted to Lorraine the six newly formed Ersatz divisions which should have gone to increase the force of his right wing. And this fresh accession of strength made the princeling commanders in Lorraine more loth to fulfil their self-suppressing rôle. Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, instead of continuing to fall back and draw the French on, halted his army, ready to accept battle. Finding the French attack slow to develop, he arranged with his neighbour to anticipate it by one of his own. The two armies had now 25 divisions against 19 and so lacked the superiority as well as the strategic position to make the counter-stroke decisive. The result was merely to throw back the French on to their fortified barrier, and so not only to restore and augment their power of resistance but to enable them to despatch troops westwards for the battle of the Marne.

The German action in Lorraine undermined Schlieffen's plan even more gravely, if less obviously, than the progressive reduction of the weight and rôle of the right wing. Here, however, came the immediate cause of the collapse.

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From the right wing Moltke subtracted, first, seven divisions to invest or stand guard over Maubeuge, Givet and Antwerp; then four divisions to reinforce the East Prussian front. When Kluck's army on the extreme right wheeled in prematurely, on his neighbour's request and with Moltke's approval, and thereby presented a chance for the Paris garrison to catch him in flank, the fact that only 13 German divisions were available against 27 Franco-British divisions on this decisive flank sheds vivid light on the way in which "Schlieffen's decisive wing" had been weakened—directly and indirectly. For if the German inferiority was due to subtraction of force from the right wing, the French superiority was due to the misguided action of the German left wing.

Although with the battle of the Marne we cross the shadowy borderline between strategy and tactics, this period, which turned the tide of the war, yields so many sidelights on the problem of the "approach" that it deserves examination. For these sidelights to be reflected a background of events is necessary.

The repulse of Joffre's right wing in Lorraine had been followed by the throwing back of his centre in a "head-on crash" in the Ardennes, and by the narrow escape of his belatedly extended left wing from a disastrous encirclement between the Sambre and the Meuse. With Plan XVII shattered to pieces, Joffre formed a new plan out of the wreckage. He decided to swing back his left and centre with Verdun as the pivot, while drawing troops from his buttressed right to form a fresh 6th Army on his left.

On the German side, the first, highly coloured, reports from the army commands in the battles of the Frontiers

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had given the German Supreme Command the impression of a decisive victory. Then the comparatively small totals of prisoners raised doubts in Moltke's mind and led him to a more sober estimate of the situation. The new pessimism of Moltke combined with the renewed optimism of his army commanders to produce a fresh change of plan, which contained the seeds of disaster. When, on Aug. 26, the British left wing fell back southwards badly mauled from Le Cateau, Kluck's I Army turned south-westwards again. If this direction was partly due to a misconception of the line of retreat taken by the British, it was also in accordance with Kluck's original rôle of a wide circling sweep. And by carrying him into the Amiens-Peronne area, where the first elements of the newly formed French 6th Army were just detraining after their "switch" from Lorraine, it compelled a hurried withdrawal of the 6th Army and thus had the effect of dislocating Joffre's design for an early return to the offensive.

But Kluck had hardly swung out to the south-west before he was induced to swing in again. For in order to ease the pressure on the British, Joffre had ordered the neighbouring army (Lanrezac) to halt and strike back at the pursuing German II Army (Bülow) which, shaken by the threat, called on Kluck for aid. Lanrezac's attack, on Aug. 29, was stopped before this aid was needed, but Bülow asked Kluck to wheel in nevertheless, in order to cut off Lanrezac's retreat. Before acceding Kluck referred to Moltke. The request came at a moment when Moltke was becoming perturbed in general over the way the French were slipping away from his embrace and, in particular, over a gap which had opened between his II

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and III Armies. Hence Moltke approved Kluck's change of direction, which meant the inevitable abandonment of the original wide sweep round the far side of Paris. Now the flank of the wheeling German line would pass the near side of Paris and across the face of the Paris defences. By this contraction of his frontage, and greater directness of approach, for the sake of security Moltke sacrificed the wider prospects inherent in the wide sweep of the Schlieffen plan. And, as it proved, instead of contracting the risk he contracted a fatal counterstroke.

The decision to abandon the original plan was definitely taken on Sept. 4, and in place of it Moltke substituted a narrower envelopment, of the French centre and right. His own centre (IV and V Armies) was to press south-east, while his left (VI and VII Armies), striking south-westwards, sought to break through the fortified barrier between Toul and Epinal, the "jaws" thus closing inwards on either side of Verdun. Meantime his right (I and II Armies) was to turn outwards and, facing west, hold off any counter move which the French attempted from the neighbourhood of Paris.

But such a counter move had begun before the newer plan could take effect.

The opportunity was perceived, not by Joffre, who had ordered a continuance of the retreat, but by Galliéni, the Military Governor of Paris. On Sept. 3 Galliéni realised the meaning of Kluck's wheel inwards, directed Maunoury's 6th Army to be ready to strike at the exposed German right flank, and next day with difficulty won Joffre's sanction. Once convinced, Joffre acted with decision. The whole left wing was ordered to turn about and return to a general offensive beginning on Sept. 6.

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Maunoury was already off the mark on the 5th and as his pressure developed on the Germans' sensitive flank, Kluck was constrained to draw off first one part and then the remaining part of his army to support his threatened flank guard. Thereby a 30 mile gap was created between the I and II German armies, a gap covered only by a screen of cavalry. Kluck was emboldened to take the risk because of the rapid retreat of the British opposite to that gaping sector. Even on the 5th, instead of turning about, the British continued a further day's march to the south. But in this "disappearance" lay the indirect and unintentional cause of victory. For when the British retraced their steps it was the report of their columns advancing into the gap which, on Sept. 9, led Bülow to order the retreat of his II Army. The temporary advantage which the I Army, already isolated by its own act, had gained over Maunoury was thereby nullified, and it fell back the same day. By the 11th the retreat had extended, independently or under orders from Moltke, to all the German armies. The attempt at a partial envelopment, pivoting on Verdun, had already failed, the jaw formed by the VI and VII Armies merely breaking its teeth on the defences of the French eastern frontier. It is difficult to see how the German command could have reasonably pinned their faith on achieving as an improvised expedient the frontal assault that in cool calculation before the war had appeared so hopeless as to lead them to take the momentous decision to advance through Belgium as the only feasible alternative.

Thus, in sum, the battle of the Marne was decided by a jar and a crack. The jar administered by Maunoury's attack on the German right flank causing a crack in a weak

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joint of the German line, and this physical crack in turn producing a moral crack in the German command.

Against this background we note that Kluck's indirect move, his wheel outward, after Le Cateau was as valuable in upsetting Joffre's second plan—for an early return to the offensive, and in accelerating the dangerous momentum of the Franco-British retreat, as his subsequent wheel inward, directly towards the opponent, was fatal to the German plan. We note, again, that Moltke's strategic approach became increasingly direct, and that the frontal assault of the German left wing proved not only a costly failure but brought no strategic return to compensate its cost.

It would be far-fetched to characterise Joffre's retreat as an indirect approach. The opportunity on the Marne was presented, not created, or even sought. Galliéni's thrust was in the nick of time, before the German I and II Armies could take up their new flank guard dispositions. But it was too direct to produce decisive results, and would have been more direct still if he had made it south of the Marne as Joffre first instructed. Finally we see that the actual decision, the move which compelled the Germans to retreat, if no more, was due to an " indirect approach " so unintentional as to form an act of pure comedy. This was the " disappearance " of the British expeditionary force and its happily belated reappearance opposite the strained and weakened joint of the German right wing. French critics have reproached it for this slowness, not realising that here was a superb if somewhat different testimony to the fable of the hare and the tortoise. Had it returned sooner the joint would hardly have been so weakened, and Maunoury's attack

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could not have produced a decision, for it had already been brought to a halt while the two German corps taken from the joint were still on the march and contributing nothing to the issue.

In analysing the cause of the German retreat we must, however, take account of a factor customarily overlooked. This was the sensitiveness of the Supreme Command to reports of landings on the Belgian coast which might menace their rear and communications. It led them to contemplate a withdrawal before the battle of the Marne even began. On Sept. 5 Lieut.-Colonel Hentsch, the representative of the Supreme Command, came to the I Army with the latest precautionary order and informed it that "The news is bad: the VII and VI Armies are blocked before Nancy-Epinal. The IV and V are meeting strong resistance. The French are railing forces from their right towards Paris. The English are going to disembark fresh troops continuously, on the Belgian coast undoubtedly. There are rumours of a Russian expeditionary force in the same parts. A withdrawal is becoming inevitable."

The sensitiveness of the German command had enlarged three battalions of marines which landed at Ostend for 48 hours into a corps of 40,000 men. The Russians are said to have sprung from the heated imagination of an English railway porter—there should be a statue in Whitehall "To the Unknown Porter." The historians of the future may consider that this party of temporary visitors to Ostend and the Russian myth were the primary cause of the victory of the Marne.

When the moral effect of these phantom forces is weighed with the material detention of German forces in

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Belgium owing to fears of a Belgian sortie from Antwerp —which developed on Sept. 9—the balance of judgment would seem to turn heavily in favour of the strategy which Roberts had advocated in vain. By it the British expeditionary force might have had a positively and not merely negatively decisive influence on the struggle.

The latent menace of the Belgian coast to the German rear had throughout been appreciated by Falkenhayn, who now replaced Moltke. His first step was to undertake the reduction of Antwerp, and from this grew the germ of a manoeuvre which savoured of the indirect approach. If its execution fell short of, and more directly than, its conception, it sufficed to bring the allies afresh to the verge of disaster.

The allied frontal pursuit had been definitely checked on the Aisne before Joffre, on Sept. 17, seeing that Maunoury's attempts to overlap the German flank were ineffectual, decided to form a fresh army under de Castelnau for an outflanking move. By then the German armies had recovered cohesion and the German command was ready to meet such limited manoeuvre, now the natural line of expectation. The next month was occupied by the extremely obvious and abortive series of attempts by either side to overlap the other's western flank—a phase popularly if inaccurately styled "the race to the sea." Falkenhayn tired of the game long before Joffre, and on Oct. 14 planned a strategic trap for the next allied attempt which he foresaw would follow. His latest formed flank army was to parry the attempt while another, composed of the forces released by the fall of Antwerp and of four newly raised corps, was to sweep down the Belgian coast, crush in the flank and crash upon the rear of the attacking

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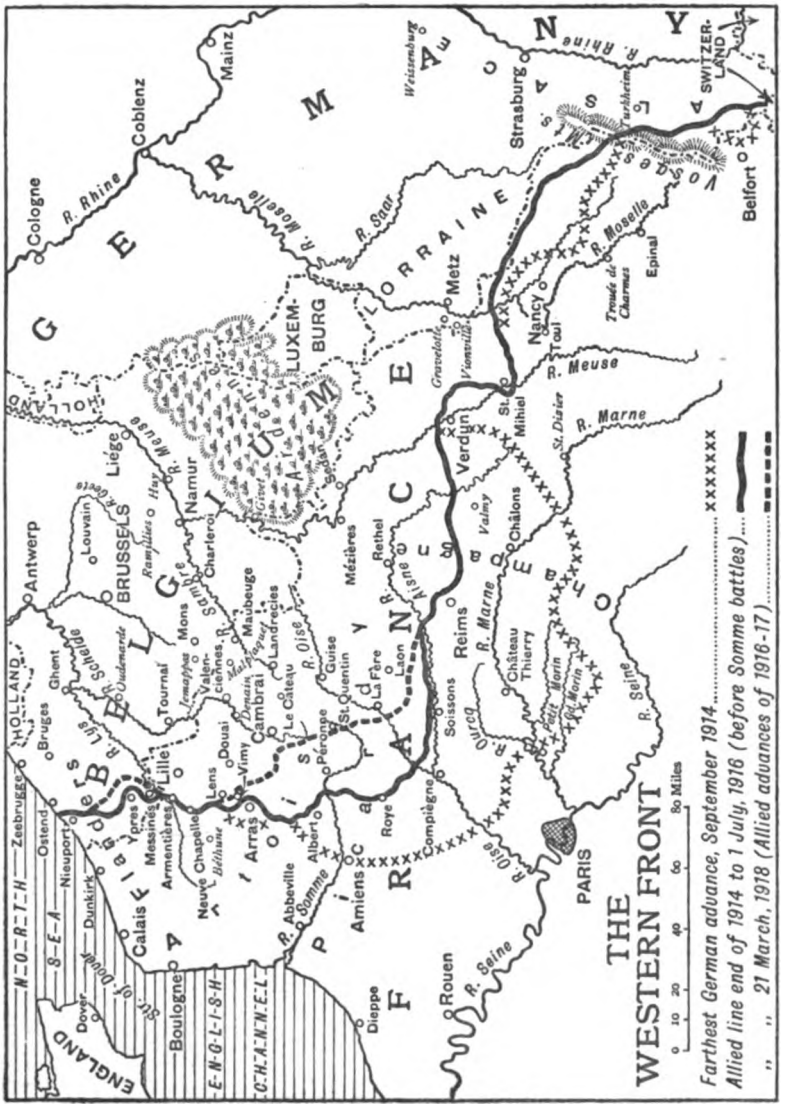
THE WESTERN FRONT
Farthest German advance, September 1914
Allied line end of 1914 to 1 July, 1916 (before Somme battles)
" " 21 March, 1918 (Allied advances of 1916-17)
0 10 20 40 60 80 Miles
GERMANY
BELGIUM
FRANCE
HOLLAND
ENGLAND
SWITZERLAND
LUXEMBURG
LORRAINE
ALSACE
NORTH SEA
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Cologne
R. Rhine
Coblenz
Mainz
R. Moselle
R. Saar
Metz
Strasburg
Belfort
Nancy
Toul
Epinal
R. Meuse
R. Marne
R. Seine
R. Oise
R. Somme
R. Aisne
Verdun
St. Mihiel
Châlons
Reims
Soissons
Compiègne
Amiens
Albert
Roye
Arras
Lens
Douai
Cambrai
Le Cateau
St. Quentin
La Fère
Laon
Rethel
Mézières
Maubeuge
Valenciennes
Mons
Tournai
Lille
Armentières
Ypres
Messines
Nieuport
Ostend
Bruges
Ghent
Zeebrugge
Antwerp
Louvain
Liège
Namur
Charleroi
Sambre
Meuse
Ardennes
Gravelotte
Vionville
Woevre
Woëvre
Trouée de Charmes
Wörth
Weissenburg
Calais
Boulogne
Dunkirk
Dover
Strait of Dover
Dieppe
Rouen
Abbeville
Peronne
Guise
Le Cateau
Landrecies
Maubeuge
Valenciennes
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allies. He even held back, momentarily, the troops pursuing the Belgian field army from Antwerp in order not to alarm the allied command prematurely.

Fortunately King Albert, inspired by caution or realism, refused Foch's invitation to join in this latest outflanking effort and declined to quit the coastal district. Thereby the Belgian army was in position to withstand, and eventually, by flooding the low coastal strip, frustrate the German sweep from the north. This compelled Falkenhayn to make a more direct approach to the allied flank, which had just been extended to Ypres by the arrival of Haig's corps from the Aisne. Although the attempted advance of the earlier-coming British right and centre had already been held up, Sir John French ordered his left, Haig, to attempt the realisation of Joffre's outflanking dream. Fortunately again, the attempt coincided with the premature opening of the German attack and thus was still-born, although for a day or two French, under Foch's influence, persisted in believing in this " attack " while Haig's troops were struggling hard even to hold their ground. The delusion of the French and British chiefs as to the reality of the situation was perhaps partly responsible for the fact that Ypres, like Inkerman, was essentially a " soldiers' battle." Falkenhayn, too, once his hope of sweeping down the coast had faded, persisted for a month in trying to force a decision by a direct approach. When the direct defence, despite its weakness, triumphed as usual over the direct attack, the trench barrier became consolidated from the Swiss frontier to the sea, and stalemate ensued.

The Western Theatre 1915-1917.—The military record of the Franco-British alliance during the next four years is

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a story of the attempt to break this deadlock, either by forcing the barrier or by haphazardly seeking a way round.

On the Western front, with its interminable parallel lines of entrenchments, strategy became the handmaiden of tactics, and even tactics became a robot. The strategical side of the years 1915-1917 does not call for much examination. On the allied side the strategy was purely that of a direct approach, and it was ineffectual to break the deadlock. Whatever be our opinion of the merit of attrition, and of the argument that the whole period should be regarded as one continuous battle, a method which requires four years to produce a decision is not to be regarded as a model for imitation.

At Neuve Chapelle, the first minute attempt in 1915, if the approach was direct, tactical surprise at least was sought and gained. Thereafter, with the adoption of prolonged "warning" bombardments, all the attempts became "bare-faced" frontal assaults. Of this nature were the French offensive near Arras in May 1915, the Franco-British offensives of September 1915 in Champagne and north of Arras, of July to November 1916 on the Somme, of April 1917 on the Aisne and at Arras, and lastly the British offensive at Ypres from July to October 1917, which like Charles II took "so long in dying" in the swamps of Passchendaele. On November 20, 1917, tactical surprise was revived by the use of massed tanks, suddenly unleashed, in place of a long preliminary bombardment, but strategically this small-scale attack, so happy in its opening, so unhappy in its end, could hardly be termed an indirect approach.

On the German side the strategy was strictly defensive except for the Verdun interlude in 1916. That, again,

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was essentially a direct approach unless the idea of bleeding one's enemy to death by an illimitable series of limited leech-bites can be termed indirect. But the expenditure in leeches caused its bankruptcy.

More akin to the nature of the indirect approach, but purely defensive in aim, was Ludendorff's ably conceived and prepared withdrawal of part of the German forces to the Hindenburg line in the spring of 1917. To anticipate the renewal of the Franco-British offensive on the Somme he had a new trench line, of great artificial strength, built across the chord of the arc Lens-Noyon-Reims. Then, after devastating the whole area inside the arc, he withdrew by methodical stages to the new and shorter line. This manoeuvre, distinguished by its moral courage in yielding ground, dislocated the whole plan of the allied spring offensive. Thereby it helped to gain the Germans a year's respite from serious danger and from any combined offensive of the allies, allowed time for Russia's disintegration to be complete, and enabled Ludendorff to make his supreme bid for victory, with superiority of force, in 1918.

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CHAPTER XII

THE NORTH-EASTERN THEATRE

On the eastern front the plans of campaign were more fluid, less elaborately worked out and formulated—although they were to be as kaleidoscopic in their changes of fortune as in the western theatre. The calculable condition was geographical; the main incalculable, Russia's rate of concentration. Russian Poland was a vast tongue of country projecting from Russia proper, and flanked on three sides by German or Austrian territory. On its northern flank lay East Prussia with the Baltic Sea beyond. On its southern flank lay the Austrian province of Galicia with the Carpathian mountains beyond, guarding the approaches to the plain of Hungary. On the west lay Silesia. As the Germanic border provinces were provided with a network of strategic railways, whilst Poland, as well as Russia itself, had only a sparse system of communications, the Germanic alliance had a vital advantage, in power of concentration, for countering a Russian advance. But if they took the offensive, the further they progressed into Poland or Russia proper the more would they lose this advantage. Hence history suggested that their most profitable strategy was to lure the Russians on into position for a counter-stroke rather than to inaugurate an offensive themselves. The one drawback was that such a Punic strategy gave the Russians time to concentrate and set in motion their cumbrous and rusty machine.

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From this arose an initial cleavage between German and Austrian opinion. Both agreed that the problem was to hold the Russians in check during the six weeks before the Germans, it was hoped, having crushed France, could switch their forces eastwards to join the Austrians in a decisive blow against the Russians. The difference of opinion was on the method. The Germans, intent on a decision against France, wished to leave a minimum force in the east, and only a political dislike of exposing national territory to invasion prevented them evacuating East Prussia and standing on the Vistula line. But the Austrians, under the influence of Conrad von Hötzendorf, Chief of their General Staff, were anxious to throw the Russian machine out of gear by an immediate offensive, and as this promised to keep the Russians fully occupied while the campaign in France was being decided Moltke fell in with this strategy. Conrad's plan was that of an offensive north-eastwards into Poland by two armies, protected by two more on their right further east.

On the opposing side, also, the desires of one ally vitally affected the strategy of the other. The Russian command, both for military and for racial motives, wished to concentrate first against Austria, while the latter was unsupported, and leave Germany alone until later, when the full strength of the Russian Army would be mobilised. But the French, anxious to relieve the German pressure against themselves, urged the Russians to deliver a simultaneous attack against Germany, and got the Russians to consent to an extra offensive for which they were neither ready, in numbers, nor organised. On the south-western front two pairs of two armies each were to converge on the Austrian forces in Galicia; on the north-western front

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two armies were to converge on the German forces in East Prussia. Russia, whose proverbial slowness and crude organisation dictated a cautious strategy, was about to break with tradition and launch out on a double direct approach. On the outbreak of war the Russian Commander-in-chief, the Grand Duke Nicholas, accelerated the invasion of East Prussia in order to ease the pressure on his French allies. On Aug. 17 Rennenkampf's Army (6½ divisions and 5 cavalry divisions) crossed the east frontier of East Prussia, and on Aug. 19-20 met and threw back the bulk (7 divisions and 1 cavalry division) of Prittwitz's German VIII Army at Gumbinnen. On Aug. 21 Prittwitz heard that Samsonov's Army (10 divisions and 3 cavalry divisions) had crossed the southern frontier of East Prussia in his rear, which was guarded by only 3 divisions. In panic Prittwitz momentarily spoke of falling back behind the Vistula, whereupon Moltke superseded him by a retired general, Hindenburg, with Ludendorff as Chief of Staff.

Developing a plan which, with the necessary movements, had been already initiated by Colonel Hoffmann of the VIII Army staff, Ludendorff concentrated some six divisions against Samsonov's left wing. This force, inferior in strength to the Russians, could not have been decisive, but Ludendorff, finding that Rennenkampf was still near Gumbinnen, took the calculated risk of withdrawing the rest of the German troops, except the cavalry screen, from that front and rushing them back against Samsonov's right wing. This daring move was aided by the absence of communication between the two Russian commanders and the ease with which the Germans deciphered the Russian wireless orders. Under converging

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blows Samsonov's flanks were crushed, his centre surrounded, and his army practically destroyed. If the opportunity was presented rather than created, this brief Tannenberg campaign must rank as a perfect example of the " interior lines " form of the indirect approach. Then receiving two fresh army corps from the front in France, the German commander turned on the slowly advancing Rennenkampf, whose lack of energy was partly due to his losses at Gumbinnen and subsequent lack of information, and drove him out of East Prussia. As a result of these battles Russia had lost quarter of a million men and, what she could afford still less, much war material. The invasion of East Prussia, however, had at least, by causing the despatch of two corps from the west, helped to make possible the French " come-back " on the Marne.

But the effect of Tannenberg was diminished because, away on the Galician front, the scales had tilted against the Central Powers. The offensive of the Austrian I and IV Armies into Poland had at first made progress, but this was nullified by the onslaught of the Russian 3rd and 8th Armies upon the weaker II and III Armies which were guarding the Austrian right flank. These armies were heavily defeated (Aug. 26-30), and driven back through Lemberg. The advance of the Russian left wing thus threatened the rear of the victorious Austrian left wing. Conrad tried to swing part of his left round, in turn, against the Russian flank, but this blow was parried and then, caught with his forces disorganised by the renewed advance of the Russian right wing, he was forced on Sept. 11 to extricate himself by a general retreat, falling back almost to Cracow by the end of September. Austria's plight compelled the Germans to send aid, and the

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bulk of the force in East Prussia was formed into a new IX Army and switched south to the southwest corner of Poland, whence it advanced on Warsaw in combination with a renewed Austrian offensive. But the Russians were now approaching the full tide of their mobilised strength; regrouping their forces and counter-attacking, they drove back the advance and followed it up by a powerful effort to invade Silesia.

The Grand Duke Nicholas formed a huge phalanx of seven armies—three in the van and two protecting either flank. A further army, the 10th, had invaded the eastern corner of East Prussia and was engaging the weak German forces there. To counter the danger the German eastern front was placed under the firm of Hindenburg-Ludendorff-Hoffmann, which devised yet another master-stroke, based on the system of lateral railways inside the German frontier. The IX Army, falling back before the Russian advance, slowed it down by a systematic destruction of the scanty communications in Poland. On reaching the Silesian frontier, unpressed, it was first switched northward to the Posen-Thorn area, and then thrust south-east, on November 11, up the west bank of the Vistula, against the joint between the two armies guarding the Russian right flank. The wedge, as if driven in by a mallet, sundered the two armies, forced the 1st back on Warsaw and almost effected another Tannenberg against the 2nd, which was nearly surrounded at Lodz, when the 5th Army from the van turned back to its rescue. As a result, part of the German enveloping force almost suffered the fate planned for the Russians, but managed to cut its way through to the main body. If the Germans were balked of decisive tactical success, this manoeuvre had been a

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classic example of how a relatively small force, by using its mobility for an indirect approach to a vital point, can paralyse the advance of an enemy several times its strength. The Russian " steam-roller " was thrown out of gear, and never again did it threaten German soil.

Within a week four new German army corps arrived from the western front, where the Ypres attack had now ended in failure, and although too late to clinch the missed chance of a decisive victory, Ludendorff was able to use them in pressing the Russians back to the Bzura-Ravka river line in front of Warsaw. There, on the east as on the west, the trench stalemate settled in, but the crust was less firm and the Russians had drained their stock of munitions to an extent that their poorly industrialised country could not make good.

The real story of 1915 on the eastern front is that of the tussle of wills between Ludendorff, who desired to reach a decision by a strategy that was at least geographically an indirect approach, and Falkenhayn, who considered that he could both limit his expenditure of force and cripple Russia's offensive power by a strategy of direct approach. Holding the superior appointment, Falkenhayn succeeded in gaining his way, but his strategy did not succeed in fulfilling either object. Ludendorff perceived that the Russians' autumn advance towards Silesia and Cracow had enmeshed the body of their army deeply in the Polish salient. In the south-western corner they had even poked their head through the meshes into Austrian territory when Ludendorff's Lodz blow fell and temporarily paralysed the body, and by the time feeling and strength came back the jagged edges of the net had been reknit and reinforced. From January to April the Russian body

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wriggled furiously but ineffectively on the Carpathian side, but its struggles merely wrapped its cumbrous mass more firmly in the net. The firm of Hindenburg-Ludendorff-Hoffmann wished to seize the opportunity for a wide indirect approach round the northern flank near the Baltic, through Kovno and Vilna, towards the Russian rear and astride their sparse rail communications with the Polish salient.

Falkenhayn, however, shrank both from its boldness and its demand upon his reserves, although he was to expend far more in his own way. Reluctantly dissuaded from a fresh direct attempt to break the trench-barrier in the west, and compelled to dole out reserves to strengthen his Austrian allies, he decided to employ them in a strategically limited, if tactically unlimited, attempt to lame Russia so that he could return to renew his offensive in the west undisturbed.

The plan in the east, suggested by Conrad and adopted by Falkenhayn, was to break through the Russian centre in the Dunajec sector between the Carpathians and the Vistula. On May 2 the blow fell. The surprise was complete, the exploitation rapid, and by May 14 the whole line along the Carpathians had been rolled back 80 miles to the San. Here we see an illuminating example of the difference between what is commonly called surprise and the indirect approach. Surprise of time, place and force was achieved, but the Russians were merely rolled back in snowball fashion. If they lost heavily they were rolled back towards their reserves, supplies, and railways, thereby consolidating the snowball and enabling accretions to make good the "chunks" that fell off. Moreover, if the pressure of this direct approach was a

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dangerous strain on the Russian command, it was not a dislocating jar.

Falkenhayn now realised that he had committed himself too far in Galicia to draw back, that his partial offensive had gained no secure halting place, and that only by bringing more troops from France could he hope to fulfil his aim of transferring troops back there. But once more he chose an almost direct approach. He changed the direction of the offensive from eastward to north-eastward and in conjunction ordered Ludendorff—all this time fretting impatiently in East Prussia—to strike south-eastward. Ludendorff contended that this plan, if convergent, was too much of a frontal attack, and that the two wings might squeeze the Russians but no more. He again urged, and Falkenhayn again rejected, his Vilna manoeuvre. The outcome proved Ludendorff correct, and Falkenhayn's shears, as they closed, merely pushed the Russians back out of the now shallow space between them. By the end of September they were back on a long straight line between Riga on the Baltic and Czernowitz on the Rumanian frontier. If never again a direct menace to Germany, they imposed on her an irremediable strain, by detaining large German forces and keeping Austria morally and physically on the rack.

When Falkenhayn broke off large-scale operations he gave Ludendorff a belated and half-hearted sanction to try belatedly his Vilna manoeuvre with his own meagre resources. The fact that this light and isolated thrust cut the Vilna-Dvinsk railway and almost reached the Minsk railway, the central line of Russian communications, despite the Russians being free to concentrate all their reserves to resist it, is a suggestive testimony to its

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potentialities if attempted earlier and in strength when the Russian body was firmly entangled in the Polish net.

Their offensive in the east terminated, and the defensive in the west unshaken, the central Powers utilised the autumn to carry through a campaign in Serbia which from the viewpoint of the war as a whole was an indirect approach with limited aim, but in its own sphere decisive in aim. Its course, too, if helped by the geographical and political situation, sheds light on the effect of this method. The plan was based on Bulgaria's intervention in the war on the side of the Central Powers. The direct Austro-German invasion was being held in check when the Bulgarians moved westward into Serbia; even then, helped by the mountainous country, the Serbian resistance remained firm until the Bulgar left wing worked round into southern Serbia across their rear, cutting them off from the Franco-British reinforcements which were being sent up from Salonika. Thereupon the collapse was swift, and only a tattered remnant survived the mid-winter retreat westwards through Albania to the Adriatic coast. This quick concentration against a junior partner relieved Austria of danger on this side and gave Germany free communication through and control of *Mittel-Europa*.

The operations of 1916 and 1917 on the Russian front call for little comment, being essentially defensive on the Austro-German side and essentially direct on the Russian side. The significance of the Russian operations is that they throw into strong relief not only the barrenness of a strategy which relies on the application of mere weight in a direct approach but its "boomerang" moral effect. When the Revolution presaged the complete collapse of Russia's military effort, in 1917, the Russian forces were

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actually better armed and better equipped than at any previous time. But the immense and visibly abortive losses had undermined the fighting will of the most patiently self-sacrificing troops in Europe. A similar effect was seen in the mutinies in the French Army after the spring offensive in 1917. Most of the outbreaks occurred when slaughter-weary troops were ordered to return to the trenches. The one Russian operation which had a certain initial indirectness of approach was Brusilov's offensive near Luck, June 1915. And it had this quality because the offensive had no serious intention. It was conceived merely as a diversion and released prematurely owing to Italy's appeal. No preparations or concentration of troops had been made, and the unexpectedness of this almost casual advance brought about such a collapse of the somnolent defence that within three days 200,000 prisoners were netted. Rarely has a surprise shock been so manifold in its strategic results. It stopped the Austrian attack on Italy. It compelled Falkenhayn to withdraw troops from the western front and so to abandon his attrition campaign round Verdun. It spurred Rumania to enter the war against the Central Powers. It caused the downfall of Falkenhayn and his replacement by Hindenburg and Ludendorff (Hoffmann, to " the firm's " loss was left in the east). Although Rumania's entry was the pretext for his supersession, the real reason was that his direct strategy in 1915, narrow both in purpose and direction, had made possible the Russian " come-back " which completed the ruin of the 1916 strategy. " Completed," merely—because the shadow of failure had already fallen across the Verdun design which, faithful to the dogmas evolved in the 19th century, had taken for

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its objective the strongest army of the enemy alliance and the strongest point of that army's position.

But the indirectness and the good effect of Brusilov's offensive were short-lived. It led the Russian command, too late, to throw the weight of their forces in this direction. And it was but in accord with the natural law of war that the prolongation of the effort along the line of hardening resistance would use up all the Russian reserves without compensating effect. Brusilov's ultimate loss of 1,000,000 casualties, though terrible, could be made good; but by revealing to the survivors the mental bankruptcy it caused the moral bankruptcy of Russia's military power.

Russia's obsessed concentration on this effort enabled Hindenburg and Ludendorff to carry through another "quick-change" indirect approach as against Serbia in 1915. Partly from force of circumstances it became more truly a strategic indirect approach. Rumania was the target. At the outset she had 23 divisions, indifferently equipped, against 7 opposing her, and she hoped that the pressure of Brusilov, of the British on the Somme, and of the allied force now at Salonika would prevent these being reinforced. It can only be said that these pressures were all direct and that they did not prevent the withdrawal of sufficient troops to crush Rumania.

Rumania's territory, sandwiched between Transylvania and Bulgaria, had strong natural ramparts on either side in the Carpathians and the Danube, but by its situation lent itself to a strategy of indirect approach. Further, her Dobruja "back-yard" strip on the other side of the Danube near the Black Sea formed a bait which a skilful opponent could attach to his hook.

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Her desire and decision to take the offensive westwards into Transylvania made her opponents' counteraction more subtly indirect than it was originally intended to be.

The Rumanian advance began on Aug. 27, 1916, three main columns, each of about 4 divisions, moving northwest through the Carpathian passes in a direct approach towards the Hungarian plain. To guard the Danube 3 divisions were left, and 3 more in the Dobruja, whither the Russians had promised to send reinforcements. But the slow and cautious advance of the Rumanian columns into Transylvania, hampered by the enemy's destruction of bridges but not by resistance, did not menace the 5 weak Austrian divisions which covered the frontier until they had been reinforced by 5 German and 2 Austrian divisions. In fulfilment of the other half of the plan, adopted by Falkenhayn before his fall, 4 Bulgarian divisions with a German stiffening and an Austrian bridging train were placed under Mackensen for the invasion of the Dobruja.

While the Rumanian columns were crawling westward into Transylvania, Mackensen stormed the Turtucaia bridgehead on Sept. 5, destroying the 3 Rumanian divisions which guarded the Danube front. Then, with his Danube flank secure, he moved eastwards, deeper into the Dobruja if away from Bucharest—the natural line of expectation. It was a shrewd moral thrust, for the automatic strategic effect was to draw away the Rumanian reserves intended to support the Transylvanian offensive, which lost such impetus as it had.

Falkenhayn, now given the executive command here, launched a counter-offensive, perhaps too eagerly and

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directly. For though he skilfully concentrated against the southern and centre columns in turn, using smaller if not minimum forces to hold off the other opponents, who hardly needed holding off, the result was to throw the Rumanians back but not to cut them off from the mountains. The mischance jeopardised the whole German plan, for with all the passes still in their hands the Rumanians sturdily repulsed all efforts to press through on their heels. His first attempt to get through further west was foiled, but a renewed effort broke through just before the coming of the winter snows. By swinging westward he had now, however, entered Rumania by the front door and the consequent direct approach had to cross a series of river lines. Fortunately, when he had been brought to a halt along the Alt, Mackensen intervened. Mackensen had switched the bulk of his force back from the Dobruja, past Turtucaia, to Sistovo, where, on Nov. 23, he forced the crossing of the Danube. It is a moot point whether this abandonment of his potential position on the Rumanian rear for a convergent advance of their main army towards Bucharest was the most profitable strategy. It enabled Falkenhayn to cross the Alt, but it enabled the Rumanians to use their "close" central position for a dangerous counter-stroke at Mackensen's flank which almost enveloped it. Once the danger was averted, however, the combined pressure of Falkenhayn and Mackensen pressed the Rumanian army back through Bucharest, whence it withdrew to the Sereth–Black Sea line. The German command had gained possession of most of Rumania with its wheat and oil, but it had not cut off or destroyed the Rumanian army, whose moral and mental strength had rather been consolidated in resisting the last stage of the enemy's advance.

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The next summer its sturdy resistance foiled the German attempt to drive it behind the Prut and thus complete the occupation of Rumania. Only in Dec. 1917, when Bolshevist Russia signed an armistice with Germany, was Rumania, isolated, forced to follow suit.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE SOUTH-EASTERN OR MEDITERRANEAN THEATRE

The Italian Theatre.—In 1917 Italy was the scene and object of the German command's autumn repertory performances. Here again the configuration of the frontier gave it scope for a geographical indirect approach which was denied to its opponent. And the latter showed no inclination to try the psychological indirect approach. The Italian frontier province of Venezia formed a salient pointing to Austria, flanked on the north by the Austrian Tyrol and Trentino, on the south by the Adriatic. Bordering on the Adriatic was a stretch of relatively low ground on the Isonzo front, but the frontier then followed the Julian and Carnic Alps in a wide sweep round to the north-west, the arc continuing south-westward to Lake Garda. The great breadth of the Alpine masses on the north and the absence of any vital objective did not encourage Italy to take the offensive in that direction. She was thus restricted, for an offensive, to a direct advance eastwards towards Austria. It inevitably suffered the potential and perpetual menace of an Austrian descent from the Trentino on its rear. But with her choice so restricted she chose this course. For two and a half years she persevered with the direct approach, by which time the " eleventh battle " of the Isonzo had been fought in vain, the Italian armies had scarcely advanced beyond their starting point and their casualties totalled some 1,100,000,

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while the Austrians had lost some 650,000. During this period Austria had taken the offensive once. This was in 1916, when Conrad had sought to obtain Falkenhayn's support for an attempt to overthrow Italy by a thrust southwards from the Trentino against the rear of the Italian armies then engaged on the Isonzo. But Falkenhayn, distrustful of the plan and of " decisive " strokes, and intent on his Verdun attrition process, declined even to lend the minimum of nine German divisions which Conrad asked for to relieve Austrian divisions on the eastern front. In default of this aid Conrad decided to make the attempt single-handed, taking some of his best divisions from the East, and thereby exposing this front to Brusilov's subsequent advance without obtaining adequate force to achieve his Italian plan. Nevertheless, the attack came critically close to success.

If it could not be said to avoid the natural line of expectation, it had a certain unexpectedness, because the Italian command did not believe that Conrad had the force or the facilities for a large-scale attack. It was a large-scale attack, but not quite large enough. The attack, when launched, gained rapid success in the first days, and although Cadorna was able and prompt to withdraw reserves from the Isonzo front—besides preparing the evacuation thence of his stores and heavy artillery—it was a race, with the odds even. The Austrian attack was within reach of a break-through into the plain, but had lost its momentum for want of reserves, when Brusilov's advance on the eastern front came to suspend it. When Ludendorff, 17 months later, took up the idea of a combined blow at Italy, because of the serious condition of Austria, the prospects were less favourable. He

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could only spare his slender general reserve of six divisions and his ally was suffering morally and materially from exhaustion. And for lack of means the plan was limited to a narrower and more direct approach—a thrust at the north-eastern corner of the Isonzo front, where it bent round towards the Alpine mass. The choice of the actual sector, however, was made on a principle new to this front—that of the line of least tactical resistance. Originally the plan was for a break-through at Caporetto followed merely by rolling up the Isonzo front, but it was subsequently expanded into a more ambitious one without an increase of means. Ludendorff at Caporetto, like the British that same autumn at Cambrai, was to provide an example of the profound strategic error of not "cutting your cloth according to your coat." He went to the other extreme from Falkenhayn, who always ordered too little cloth, under-estimating the measurements of the coat, and then had to order more to enlarge the coat—into an unsatisfactory patchwork.

On October 24 the attack was launched, skilfully prepared and concealed, and drove a wedge deep between the Italian Isonzo armies. A week later it had reached the Tagliamento. But once the Italians had extricated their severed forces, if with the loss of a large part, the continuation of the advance became a purely direct approach westwards, pressing the Italians back to the Piave river, a stout barricade behind which to shelter. Too late Ludendorff thought of switching reserves round to the Trentino, but was foiled by the inadequacy of the rail communications. The Trentino army made an ineffective attempt with its own slight resources; it no longer had the effect of a true rear thrust, for the whole

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Italian front and reserves had been pushed almost as far back.

The initial surprise had passed, the Austro-German attack was now purely a direct convergence, pressing the Italians back towards their reserves, supplies, homeland, and allied reinforcements. It had the inevitable negative result. But the measure of success attained with such slender resources formed an ironical reflection on Falkenhayn's refusal to listen to Conrad's more promising plan early in 1916.

The Balkan Theatre. — Before we turn to consider Ludendorff's plan for 1918, it is necessary to survey the action taken or attempted by his opponents, during the past three years, beyond the bounds of the French and Russian fronts.

While the French and British headquarters in France preserved an unquenchable faith in the power of a direct approach not only to break through the trench barrier but to gain a decisive victory, strong doubt was felt from October 1914 onwards in quarters either further from or nearer to the trench front. Those who had this view, from the perspective which distance enables, were not all political leaders; they included Galliéni in France and Kitchener in England—who, on Jan 7, 1915, wrote to Sir John French: "The German lines in France may be looked upon as a fortress that cannot be carried by assault and also that cannot be completely invested, with the result that the lines may be held by an investing force while operations proceed elsewhere."

It was argued, notably by Mr. Churchill, that the enemy alliance should be viewed as a whole, and that modern developments had so changed conceptions of

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distance and powers of mobility that a blow in some other theatre of war would correspond to the " historic " attack on an enemy's strategic flank. One might here remark that the example of Napoleon, so often quoted to support the case of persevering on the Western front, appears rather to lend its weight to this alternative design. Further, it was agreed that such an operation would be in accordance with the traditional amphibious strategy of Britain, and would enable her to exploit the military advantage, hitherto neglected, of sea-power. In October 1914 Lord Fisher had urged a plan for a landing on the German coast. In January 1915 Lord Kitchener advocated another, for severing Turkey's main line of eastward communication by a landing in the Gulf of Alexandretta. The post-war comments of Hindenburg and Enver have shown how this would have paralysed Turkey, but it could hardly have exercised a wider influence or been an indirect approach to the Central Alliance as a whole.

Mr. Lloyd George advocated the transfer of the bulk of the British forces to the Balkans as a way to the enemy's " back-door." But the French and British commands, confident of an early decision in France, argued vehemently against any alternative strategy, stressing the difficulties of transport and supply and the ease with which Germany in their opinion could switch troops to meet the threat. If there was substance in their contention, their fervour led them to exaggerate their case. Their objections, too, were less relevant when applied to Galliéni's particular brand of Balkan scheme. He proposed a landing at Salonika as a starting-point for a march on Constantinople with an army strong enough to encourage Greece and Bulgaria to join forces. The capture of

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Constantinople was to be followed by an advance up the Danube into Austria-Hungary in conjunction with the Rumanians. This had a fundamental resemblance to the course actually taken in October 1918; in September of that year German military opinion tended to regard such a contingency "as decisive," and in the first week of November the threat, not yet close, was an important factor in hastening Germany's capitulation.

In January 1915, however, the weight of military opinion bore down all counter-proposals in favour of a concentration of effort on the western front. But misgivings were not silenced and at this juncture a situation arose which revived the Near Eastern scheme in a new if attenuated form.

On January 2, 1915, Kitchener received an appeal from the Grand Duke Nicholas for a diversion which would relieve the Turkish pressure on Russia's forces in the Caucasus. Kitchener felt unable to provide the troops and suggested a naval demonstration against the Dardanelles, which Churchill, appreciating the wider strategic and economic issues, proposed in default of military aid to convert into an attempt to force the passage. His naval advisers, if not enthusiastic, did not oppose the project, and the admiral on the spot, Carden, drew up a plan. A naval force, mainly of obsolete vessels, was got together with French aid, and after preliminary bombardment, entered the straits on March 18. Drift mines, however, caused the sinking of several ships, and the attempt was abandoned.

It is a moot point whether a prompt renewal of the advances would not have succeeded, for the Turkish ammunition was exhausted, and in such conditions the

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mine obstacle might have been overcome. But the new naval commander, Admiral de Robeck, decided against it, unless military aid was forthcoming. Already, a month before, the War Council had determined on a joint attack, and began the despatch of a military force under Sir Ian Hamilton. But as the authorities had drifted into the new scheme, so were they tardy in releasing the necessary troops, and even when sent, in inadequate numbers, several more weeks' delay had to be incurred—at Alexandria—in order to redistribute the force in its transports suitably for tactical action. Worst of all, this fumbling policy had thrown away the chance of surprise. When the preliminary bombardment took place in Feb. only two Turkish divisions were at the straits, this was increased to four by the date of the naval attack, to six when Hamilton was at last able to attempt his landing. For this he had only four British divisions and one French division—actually inferior in strength to the enemy in a situation where the inherent preponderance of defensive over offensive power was multiplied by the natural difficulties of the terrain. His weakness of numbers and his restricted mission of aiding the passage of the fleet compelled him to choose a landing on the Gallipoli peninsula in preference to one on the mainland or on the Asiatic shore.

On April 25 he made his spring, at the southern tip of the peninsula near Cape Helles and near Gaba Tepe, some 15 miles up the Aegean coast; the French, as a diversion, made a temporary landing at Kum Kale on the Asiatic shore. But once the momentary asset of tactical surprise had passed, and the Turks were able to bring up their reserves, the invaders could not expand their two precarious footholds.

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Ultimately, in July, the British Government decided to send a further five divisions to reinforce the seven now on the peninsula. By the time they arrived the Turkish strength in the region had also risen, to 15 divisions. Hamilton decided on a double stroke—a reinforced blow from Gaba Tepe and a new landing at Suvla Bay, a few miles north—to sever the middle of the peninsula and secure the heights commanding the Narrows. If this thrust appears more direct than a landing at Bulair or on the Asiatic shore, its justification is that it was on a line not expected by the enemy command, whose reserves were concentrated at the other points. Only one and a half Turkish battalions barred the way during the 36 hours before reserves arrived. The time and opportunity were forfeited by the inexperience of the landing troops and the inertia of the commanders on the spot. The deadlock, the disappointment, and the opposition of those who had always disliked the project, soon brought about the evacuation of the peninsula. The verdict of Falkenhayn on the Dardanelles scheme was: "If the straits between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea were not permanently closed to Entente traffic, all hope of a successful course of the war would be very considerably diminished. Russia would have been freed from her significant isolation . . . . . which offered a safer guarantee than military successes, . . . that sooner or later a crippling of the forces of this Titan must take place . . . automatically." The fault was not in the conception but in the execution. Had the British used at the outset even a fair proportion of the forces they ultimately expended in driblets, it is clear from the evidence of the opposing commanders that success would have crowned their undertaking. If the

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Dardanelles move was a direct approach to Turkey, it was an indirect approach to the main Turkish armies then engaged in the Caucasus and, on the higher level, an indirect approach to the Central Powers as a whole. Viewed against the dark and barren prospect in France, to which historical experience afforded not one ray of hope, the Dardanelles conception appears to have fulfilled the law of adjusting the end to the means as thoroughly as the execution violated this law.

The Palestine and Mesopotamian Theatres.—The Middle East expeditions hardly come within the scope of this survey. Strategically they were both too remote to have any hope of exercising a decisive effect, and considered as diversions they both absorbed far larger forces of the British than they detained of the enemy. In the sphere of policy a case can be made out. Britain has not only prospered greatly and consistently but diverted danger from and redeemed the forfeits of her allies by picking the plums in the enemy's orchard while the main forces, allied and enemy, have been mutually exhausting themselves in a struggle for the gate. In the event of an unfavourable issue to the main struggle she has had the plums to bargain with, and if the issue was favourable she has simply pocketed them. Thus, there is at least ground for enquiry whether this unmilitary policy does not deserve to be developed into a grand strategical theory, for British guidance.

The local strategy of the Palestine expedition, however, deserves study. At the outset it combined the disadvantages of both the direct and indirect approach. It took the line of natural expectation, which was also the longest and most difficult way round to any vital point of the

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Turkish power. After the first two failures at Gaza, which guarded the direct coast approach from Egypt to Palestine, in March and April 1917, the larger force available in the autumn was used for a less direct attempt. The plan—designed by Chetwode and adopted by Allenby on relieving Murray in command—was, indeed, as geographically indirect as the water supply and the narrow width of the tract between the sea and the desert allowed. The Turkish defences stretched some 20 miles inland from Gaza, while, 10 miles beyond, Beersheba formed an outlying post guarding the eastern margin of the area of possible approach. Secrecy and ruses drew the Turkish attention Gaza-wards; then Beersheba with its water supply was seized by a wide and swift swoop on its unprotected side. Next in the plan, preceded by a distracting attack on Gaza, was a blow at the flank of the Turkish main position while the cavalry from Beersheba swept round the Turks' rear. But difficulties in the water supply and a Turkish counter-stroke north of Beersheba hamstrung this manoeuvre and, although the Turkish front was pierced, decisive results were missed. The Turkish forces were rolled back, ultimately beyond Jerusalem, but they were not rolled up and cut off as intended.

The decision and the attempt to reach it were postponed a year—until September 1918. Meantime in the desert to the east and south a curious campaign was not only helping to weaken the fighting strength of Turkey but shedding some new light on strategy and, in particular, on the indirect approach. This campaign was the Arab Revolt, with Lawrence as its guiding brain. If it falls into the category of guerrilla warfare, which is by its very nature indirect, its strategy had such a scientifically calcu-

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lated basis that we should not miss its reflection on normal warfare. Admittedly an extreme form of the indirect approach it was most economically effective within the limits of the instrument. The Arabs were both more mobile and less able to bear casualties than orthodox armies. The Turks were almost insusceptible to loss of men, but not to loss of material—of which they suffered a scarcity. Superb in sitting tight in a trench, firing at a directly oncoming target, they were neither adaptable nor able to endure the strain of fluid operations. They were trying to hold down a vast area of country with a quantity of men which was not large enough to spread itself in a network of posts over it. And they depended on a long and frail line of communications.

From these premises was evolved a strategy which was the antithesis of orthodox doctrine. Where normal armies, unless commanded by a Napoleon, seek to preserve contact, the Arabs sought to avoid it. When normal armies seek to destroy the opposing forces, the Arabs sought purely to destroy material, and to seek it at points where there was no force. But they went further. Instead of trying to drive the enemy away by cutting off his supplies, they aimed to keep him there, by allowing short rations to reach him, so that the longer he stayed the weaker and more depressed he became. Blows might induce him to concentrate, and simplify both his supply and security problems. Pin-pricks kept him spread out. Yet with all its unconventionality this strategy merely carried to its logical conclusion that of following the line of least resistance. As its author has said: "The Arab Army never tried to maintain or improve an advantage, but to move off and strike again somewhere else. It used

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the smallest force in the quickest time at the farthest place. To continue the action till the enemy had changed his dispositions to resist it, would have been to break the fundamental rule of denying him targets."

What was this but the strategy evolved in 1918 on the Western Front? Fundamentally the same, but carried to a further degree. Its application to the problem of normal warfare is conditioned by the factors of time, space and force. While a quickened and active form of blockade it is inherently slower to take effect than a strategy of decision. Hence, if national conditions make a quick decision imperative the latter appears preferable. But unless the end is sought by an indirect approach, it is likely to prove slower, more costly, and more dangerous than the "Lawrence" strategy. Lack of room and density of force are also handicaps, if rarely insuperable. A reasoned verdict is that in normal warfare the choice would fall on the form of indirect approach which aims at a quick decision, by "trapping" the opponent, if there is a good prospect of its success. Otherwise, or after it has failed, the choice should fall on that form of the indirect approach which aims at an eventual decision by sapping the opponent's strength and will. Anything is preferable to the direct approach.

The opportunity of carrying the strategy of the Arab revolt to completion was not vouchsafed, for in Sept. 1918, when it had reduced the Turkish forces on the Hejaz line to a state of paralytic helplessness, the main Turkish forces in Palestine were overthrown by a single decisive stroke. In this Allenby stroke, however, the Arab forces played at least a significant part.

Whether these final operations in Palestine should be

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classified as a campaign or as a battle completed by a pursuit is difficult to determine. For they opened with the forces in contact and the victory was complete before that contact was broken, so that they would seem to fall into the battle category. But victory was achieved mainly by strategic means, and the share of fighting was insignificant.

This has led to a depreciation of the result, especially among those whose scale of values is governed by the dogma of Clausewitz that blood is the price of victory. If Allenby had a superiority of more than two to one in men, although less in guns, the balance was not so heavily in his favour as in the original British advance into Palestine, which had ended in failure. And many other offensives had failed, both in the World War and earlier, with a similar superiority of force.

A more serious " depreciation " is on the score of the decaying morale of the Turks. But when full deduction is made for the advantageous conditions of Sept. 1918, the operations deserve to rank among history's masterpieces for their breadth of vision and treatment. If the subject was not a difficult one, the picture is almost unique as a perfect conception perfectly executed, in its broad lines at least.

The plan abundantly fulfilled Willisen's definition of strategy as " the study of communication " and Napoleon's maxim that " the whole secret of the art of war lies in making oneself master of the communications." For it aimed to make the British master of all, and all forms of, the Turkish communications. To cut an army's lines of communication is to paralyse its physical organisation. To close its line of retreat is to paralyse its moral organisation.

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And to destroy its lines of " inter-communication "—by which orders and reports pass—is to paralyse its sensory organisation, the essential connection between brain and body. The third was here sought and secured by the air force. It drove the enemy aircraft out of the air, making the enemy's command blind, and then by bombing the main telegraph and telephone exchange at Afule made it also deaf and dumb. The second phase of this action aptly followed the cutting of the main railway at Deraa by the Arabs, which had the physical effect of shutting off the flow of Turkish supplies temporarily—and temporarily was all that mattered here—and the mental effect of inducing the Turkish command to send part of its scanty reserves thither, just before it was deprived of its power of control.

The three so-called Turkish " armies " depended on a single artery of railway communication from Damascus which branched at Deraa, one line continuing south to the Hejaz and the other turning west across the Jordan to Afule, where it sent out one shoot towards the sea at Haifa and the other southwards again to the railheads of the VII and VIII Turkish armies. The IV Army east of the Jordan depended on the Hejaz branch. To get a grip on Afule and the Jordan crossing near Beisan would sever the communications of the VII and VIII Armies, and also close their lines of retreat except for the difficult outlet to the desolate region east of the Jordan. To get a grip on Deraa would sever the communications of all three armies and the best line of retreat of the IV.

Deraa was too far to be reached from the British front in a time short enough to exert a prompt influence on the issue. Happily, the Arabs were available to emerge like

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phantoms from the desert and pounce upon and cut all three of its railway "spokes." But neither the nature of the Arab tactics nor the nature of the country nor Deraa lent itself to the formation of a strategic barrage across the Turkish rear. As Allenby sought a quick and complete decision he must seek a closer site for such a barrage, and one where the Jordan and the ranges west of it could be utilised to bar the enemy's exit. The railway junction of Afule and the Jordan bridge near Beisan lay within a 60 mile radius, and hence within the range of a strategic "bound" by armoured cars and cavalry, provided that these vital points could be reached without check. The problem was, to find a line of approach difficult for the enemy to obstruct in time, and to ensure that he did not do so. How was it solved? The flat coastal plain of Sharon afforded a corridor to the Plain of Esdraelon and Valley of Jezreel, where Afule and Beisan lay. This corridor was interrupted by only a single door, so far back that it was unguarded, formed by the narrow mountain belt which separates the coastal Plain of Sharon from the inland Plain of Esdraelon. But the entrance to the corridor was bolted and barred by the trenches of the Turkish front.

By a long-continued "psychological preparation," in which ruses were substitutes for shells, Allenby diverted the enemy's attention away from the coast to the Jordan flank. In this he was helped by the very failure of two attempted advances east of the Jordan during the spring. In September, while the Turks' attention was still being drawn east, Allenby's troops were moving secretly west until in the sector near the coast their two to one superiority had developed into five to one. On Sept. 19, after

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quarter of an hour's intense bombardment, the infantry advanced, swept over the two shallow Turkish trench systems, and then wheeled inland, like a huge door swinging on its hinges. The cavalry pressed through the opened door and, riding up the corridor with their armoured cars ahead, gained the passes into the Plain of Esdraelon. This successful passage owed much to the fact that the Air Force had rendered the enemy command deaf, dumb and blind. Next day the strategic barrage was established across the Turks' rear. Their one remaining bolt-hole was eastwards over the Jordan. They might have reached this but for the Air Force, as the direct infantry advance was making slow progress in face of the stubborn Turkish rearguards. Early in the morning of Sept. 21 the British aircraft spotted a large column —practically all that survived of the two Turkish armies— winding down the steep gorge from Nablus to the Jordan. Four hours' attack reduced this procession to stagnation. From this moment may be timed the extinction of the VII and VIII " Armies." The rest was but a rounding up of cattle.

East of the Jordan, with no strategic barrage feasible, the fate of the IV " Army " was a rapid attrition under constant pin-pricks rather than a neat despatch. The capture of Damascus followed. The victory was then exploited by an advance to Aleppo, which had just been reached when Turkey, menaced more imminently by Bulgaria's collapse and Milne's approach from Salonika on Constantinople and her rear, surrendered on October 31.

In analysing the decisive victory in Palestine one notes that the Turks were still capable of holding up the British

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infantry until the strategic barrage across their rear became known and produced its inevitable, and invariable, moral effect. Further, that because a preliminary condition of trench warfare existed the infantry were necessary to break the lock. But once the normal condition of warfare was thus restored the victory was achieved by the mobile elements, which formed but a fraction of the total force. The subtlety of this particular example of indirect approach was limited to the preparation; its execution depended purely on the dislocating and demoralising application of mobility which, by its extreme degree, was a sustained surprise.

One other south-eastern theatre requires incidental note—Salonika. The despatch of allied troops thither arose out of a belated and ineffectual attempt to send succour to the Serbs in the autumn of 1915. Three years later it was the spring of an offensive which had vital consequences. But while the retention of a foothold in the Balkans was necessary during the interval for reasons of policy, and of potential strategy, the wisdom and necessity of locking up so many troops, ultimately half a million, in what the Germans ironically called their "largest internment camp," are open to doubt.

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CHAPTER XIV

THE STRATEGY OF 1918

ANY study of the military course of the final year is dependent upon and inseparable from an understanding of the naval situation preceding it. For, in default of an early military decision, the naval blockade had tended more and more to govern the military situation.

Indeed, if the historian of the future has to select one day as decisive for the outcome of the World War he will probably choose Aug. 2, 1914—before the war, for England, had yet begun—when Mr. Winston Churchill, at 1.25 a.m., sent the order to mobilise the British Navy. That Navy was to win no Trafalgar, but it was to do more than any other factor towards winning the war for the Allies. For the Navy was the instrument of the blockade, and as the fog of war disperses in the clearer light of these post-war years that blockade is seen to assume larger and larger proportions, to be more and more clearly the decisive agency in the struggle. Like those "jackets" which used to be applied in American gaols to refractory prisoners, as it was progressively tightened so did it first cramp the prisoner's movements and then stifle his breathing, while the tighter it became and the longer it continued the less became the prisoner's power of resistance and the more demoralising the sense of constriction.

Helplessness induces hopelessness, and history attests that loss of hope and not loss of lives is what decides the

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issue of war. No historian would underrate the direct effect of the semi-starvation of the German people in causing the final collapse of the "home-front." But leaving aside the question of how far the revolution caused the military defeat, instead of *vice versa*, the intangible all-pervading factor of the blockade intrudes into every consideration of the military situation.

For it was the fact and the potential menace, if not perhaps the effect, of the blockade which impelled Germany to undertake her first submarine campaign in February 1915. This not only gave Britain a lever to loosen the Declaration of London and tighten the blockade—by claiming the right to intercept and search all ships suspected of carrying goods to Germany—but the German action in torpedoing the "Lusitania" gave the United States a vital if delayed propulsion towards entering the war, besides serving to counteract the friction between Britain and the United States caused by the tightened blockade. Two years later the economic strain caused by the blockade led the German military leaders to sanction an intensive renewal of the "unlimited" submarine campaign. Britain's dependence on sea-borne supplies for the sustenance of her people and the maintenance of her armies was a weak point in her armour, and the inherently quicker effect of the submarine form of blockade lent force to the argument that this grand strategic indirect approach would inflict a mortal blow. If the calculation proved faulty, Britain came critically close to establishing its correctness. The loss of shipping rose from 500,000 tons in February to 875,000 in April, and when counter-measures combined with Germany's insufficient submarine resources to cause a progressive

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decline Britain had only food enough to sustain her people for another six weeks.

The German leaders' hopes of an economic decision had reacted on their fears of an economic collapse and led them to initiate the submarine campaign, fully realising, and accepting as almost certain, the risk that it would bring the United States into the war against them. This risk became fact on April 6, 1917. But although, as Germany calculated, America's military strength required a long time to develop, her entry into the war had a prompt effect in tightening the grip of the naval blockade. As a party to the war, the United States, indeed, wielded this economic weapon with a determination, regardless of the remaining neutrals, far exceeding Britain's boldest claims in the past years of controversy over neutral rights. No longer was the blockade hindered by neutral objections, but instead America's co-operation converted it into a strangle-hold under which Germany gradually became limp, since military power is based on economic endurance —a truth too often overlooked. The blockade may be classified as a grand strategy of indirect approach to which no effective resistance was possible and of a type which incurred no risk except in its slowness of effect. The effect, however, true to the law of momentum, tended to gather speed as it continued, and at the end of 1917 the Central Powers were feeling it severely. It was this economic pressure which not only lured but constrained Germany into the military offensive of 1918 which, once it failed, became *felo de se*. In default of a serious peace move she had no choice between it and slow enfeeblement ending in eventual collapse.

If, after the Marne in 1914, or even later, she had

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adopted a war policy of defence in the West, offence in the East, the issue of the war might well have been different. For, on the one hand, she could unquestionably have consummated the dream of *Mittel-Europa*, and, on the other, the blockade was still a loose grip, and could hardly have been tightened effectively so long as the United States remained outside the conflict. With the whole belt of central Europe under her control, with Russia out of the war, even in economic vassalage, there is flimsy ground for any belief that the efforts of Britain, France and Italy could have done more than, if as much as, to induce Germany to relinquish the bargaining counters of Belgium and northern France in return for the undisputed retention of her gains in the East. A greater Germany, greater too in potential strength and resources, could well have afforded to forego the desire for a military victory over the western allies. Indeed, to forego aims which are not "worth the candle" is the difference between grand strategy and grandiose stupidity.

But in 1918 the chance had passed. Her economic endurance had been severely reduced, and the tightening blockade was reducing it faster than any late-hour infusion of the economic resources of conquered Rumania and the Ukraine could restore it.

These were the conditions under which the final German offensive, the bid for a saving military decision, was made. The release of troops from the Russian front gave her superiority of force, if considerably less than the allies had enjoyed during their offensive campaigns. In March 1917, 178 French, British, and Belgian divisions were marshalled against 129 German divisions. In March 1918, 192 German divisions were available against 173

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allied divisions—counting proportionately the double size American divisions, of which 4½ had arrived. If the Germans could bring a few more from the East, the American inflow developed from a trickle to a torrent under pressure of the emergency. Of the German total 85, known as "storm divisions," were in reserve, and of the allied total 62—but under no centralised control; for the makeshift expedient of a general reserve of 30 divisions under the Versailles military executive committee had broken down when Haig declared that he was unable to contribute his quota of 7. When the test came the agreement for mutual support made between the French and British commanders broke down. Disaster hastened an overdue step, and on Haig's initiative Foch was appointed first to co-ordinate and then to command in chief the allied armies.

The German plan was distinguished by a research for tactical surprise more thorough and far-reaching than in any of the earlier operations of the war. To the credit of the German command and staff they realised that the obvious is an obstacle which superior weight cannot compensate, and, once created, can rarely overcome. That effective surprise can only be attained by a subtle compound of many deceptive elements. That only by such a compound key could a gate be opened in the long-locked front. A brief but intense bombardment with gas-shell was to be the main element—Ludendorff had failed to grasp the significance of the tank and to develop it in time. But in addition the infantry were trained in new infiltrating tactics of which the guiding idea was that the leading troops should probe and penetrate the weak points of the defence while the reserves were directed to back up

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success, not to redeem failure. The assaulting divisions were to be brought up over-night, the masses of artillery brought close to the front line in concealment, and to open fire without preliminary "registration." Further, the preparations made for successive attacks at other points helped to mystify the defender while being in readiness for the future.

But this was not all. From the experience of the vain allied offensives Ludendorff had drawn the deduction that "Tactics had to be considered before purely strategical objects which it is futile to pursue unless tactical success is possible." In default of a strategical indirect approach this was undoubtedly true. Hence in the German design the new tactics were to be accompanied by a new strategy. One was the corollary of the other, both based on a new or resurrected principle—that of following the line of least resistance. The conditions of 1918 in France limited the scope for taking, nor did Ludendorff attempt to take, the line of least expectation. But with the opposing armies spread out in contact along the far-flung line of entrenchments, a quick break-through followed by a rapid exploitation along the line of least resistance might come within reach of a goal which normally is only attainable by taking the line of least expectation.

The break-through proved quick, the exploitation rapid. Yet the plan failed. Where did the fault lie? The general criticism subsequent to the event and to the war was that the tactical bias had led Ludendorff to change direction and dissipate his strength, to concentrate on tactical success at the expense of the strategical goal. It seemed, and was said, that the principle was false. But a closer examination of the German documents, since

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available, and of Ludendorff's own orders and instructions, throws a different light on the question. It would seem, indeed, that the real fault lay in Ludendorff's failure to carry out in practice the new principle he had adopted in theory; that he either did not grasp or shrank from the full implication of this new strategic theory. For, in fact, he dissipated too large a part of his reserves in trying to redeem tactical failure, and hesitated too long over the decision to exploit his tactical successes.

The trouble began even in his choice of the point of attack. It was to be made by the XVII, II, and XVIII Armies on a 47 mile front between Arras and La Fère. Two alternative proposals had been considered. One, for an attack on the flanks of the Verdun salient, had been rejected on the score that the ground was unfavourable, that a break-through could hardly lead to a decisive result, and that the French Army had recuperated too well after nearly a year's undisturbed convalescence. The other, for an attack between Ypres and Lens, although favoured by Ludendorff's strategical adviser, Wetzell, and espoused by Prince Rupprecht, commanding the front between St. Quentin and the sea, was rejected on the score that it would meet the main mass of the British Army and that the low-lying ground would be late in drying.

The choice fell on the Arras–La Fère sector for the reason that, apart from the ground being favourable, this sector was the weakest in defences, defenders, and reserves. Moreover it was close to the joint between the French and British armies, and Ludendorff hoped to separate the two and then pulverise the British, which he estimated to be weakened seriously by its prolonged efforts at Ypres. But although the comparative weakness

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of this sector was true as a generalisation, the classification was loose and inaccurate. The northerly third of it was strong and strongly held, by the British 3rd Army, with 14 divisions (4 in reserve), while the bulk of the British reserves were on this flank, which also could and did receive support more quickly from the other British armies which lay to the north. The remaining two-thirds of the sector upon which the German blow fell was held by the British 5th Army. The central part facing the German II Army was held by 7 divisions (2 in reserve). The southern part facing the German XVIII Army was also held by 7 divisions (1 in reserve).

But Ludendorff gave his XVII Army near Arras 19 divisions for the initial attack, by its left wing only, on a 9½-mile frontage. South of it came the II Army. As the British salient towards Cambrai was not to be attacked directly, but pinched out, this 4 mile stretch was adequately occupied by 2 German divisions, and the II Army had 18 divisions for its 9½-mile attack frontage. On the extreme south, either side of St. Quentin, came the XVIII Army. Ludendorff gave it only 24 divisions to attack on a 20-mile frontage. Hence we see that it had only half the proportionate strength of the other armies. Despite his principle he was distributing his strength according to the enemy's strength and not concentrating against the weakest resistance. The direction given in his orders emphasised this still more. The main effort was to be exerted north of the Somme. After breaking through, the XVII and II Armies were to wheel north-west, pressing the British back towards the coast, while the river and the XVIII Army guarded their flank. The XVIII Army was merely an offensive flank-guard. This plan was to be

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radically changed in execution, and to have the appearance of following the line of least resistance, because Ludendorff gained rapid success where he desired it little and failed to gain success where he wanted it most.

The attack was launched on March 21, and the surprise was helped by an early morning mist. But while the thrust broke through completely south of the Somme, where the defence—but also the attacking force—was thinnest, it was held up near Arras, a check which reacted on all the attack north of the river. Such a result was a calculable certainty. But Ludendorff, still violating his new principle, spent the following days in trying to revive his attack against the stout and firmly held bastion of Arras, maintaining this direction as his principal line of effort. Meantime he kept a tight rein on the XVIII Army which was advancing in the south without serious check from its opponents. As late as March 26 he issued orders which restrained it from crossing the Avre and tied it to the pace of its neighbour, the II, which in turn was held back by the very limited success of the XVII Army near Arras. Thus we see that in reality Ludendorff was bent on breaking the British Army by breaking down its strongest sector of resistance in a direct assault. And because of this obsession he failed, until too late, to throw the weight of his reserves along the line of least resistance south of the Somme. The intended wheel to the north-west might have come to pass if it had been made after passing the flank, and thus being directed against the rear of the Arras bastion. On March 26 the attack north of the Somme (by the left wing of the XVII Army and the right of the II Army) was visibly weakening as the price of its hard-earned gains. South of the Somme the left

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of the II Army reached, and was now to be embarrassed by, the desert of the old Somme battlefields—a brake on progress and supply. The XVIII Army alone was advancing with unslackened impetus.

This situation led Ludendorff to adopt a new plan, but without relinquishing his old. He ordered for March 28 a fresh and direct attack on the high ground near Arras—by the right of the XVII Army and to be followed by a VI Army attack just to the north between Vimy and La Bassée. But the promising situation south of the Somme led him to indicate Amiens as the principal goal for the II Army. Even so, he restrained the XVIII Army from pushing on, to turn the flank of the Amiens resistance, without fresh orders! Amiens, having been recognised as an additional main objective, was to be gained by a direct approach across bad ground.

On March 28 the Arras attack was launched, unshielded by mist or surprise, and failed completely in face of the well-prepared resistance of Byng's 3rd Army. Only then did Ludendorff abandon his original idea, and direct his main effort, and some of his remaining reserves, towards Amiens. But meantime he ordered the XVIII Army to mark time for two days. When the attack was renewed on March 30 it had little force and made little progress in face of a resistance that had been afforded time to harden, helped by the cement of French reserves which were now being poured into the sagging wall. That day was the first on which their artillery, arriving later than the infantry, had come into action in force. A further German effort was made by 15 divisions, of which only 4 were fresh, on April 4, and had still less success. Rather than be drawn into an attrition struggle, Luden-

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dorff then suspended the attack towards Amiens. At no time had he thrown his weight along the line of fracture between the British and French armies. Yet on March 24 Pétain had intimated to Haig that if the German progress continued along this line he would have to draw back the French reserves south-westwards to cover Paris. How little more German pressure would have been needed to turn the crack into a yawning chasm ! The knowledge is one more testimony to the historical truth that a joint is the most sensitive and profitable point of attack, and also that a penetration between two forces or units is more dangerous if they are assembled shoulder to shoulder than if they are widely separated and organically separate.

With a large part of his reserves holding the vast bulge south of Arras, Ludendorff turned, if without much confidence, to release a fresh attack further north. On March 25 he had ordered a small-scale attack to be prepared between La Bassée and Armentières as a step towards expanding the width of his break-through. After the failure of his Arras attack on March 28 he had extended the scheme. The attack south of Armentières was to be followed 24 hours later by an attack north of it, pinching out the town. Ordered late, the attack was not ready until April 9, and even then was conceived merely as a diversion. But its astonishing early success, helped again by an early morning fog, against a weakened sector led Ludendorff to convert it bit by bit into a major effort. On April 9 south of Armentières, 9 German divisions with 5 more in close reserve, fell on 1 Portuguese and 2 British divisions along a 9½ mile front. Next day 4 divisions attacked north of Armentières on a 5½ mile front. As the resistance began to harden fresh divisions were thrown in

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by driblets, until by the end of the first week in May more than 40 had been used. Ludendorff had thus drifted into an attrition campaign.

The British were desperately close to their bases and the sea, but their resistance had stopped the German tide after a 10-mile invasion just short of the important railway junction of Hazebrouck. Then, on April 17, Ludendorff attempted a convergent blow on either side of Ypres, but it was anticipated and almost nullified by Haig's indirect action in swinging back his line here during the previous 48 hours. This project deflated, Ludendorff returned to a purely direct attack south of Ypres, where French reserves had arrived to take over part of the line. The attack on April 25, falling on the joint, cracked it at Kemmel Hill, but Ludendorff stopped the exploitation for fear of a counterstroke. Throughout he had doled out reserves sparingly, too late and too few for real success. After the failure of his first offensive he seems to have had little faith in the second, and after a final effort on April 29 he stopped it. But he intended only a temporary suspension until he could draw off the French reserves to their own front, planning then to strike a final and decisive blow at the British in Flanders. Already he had ordered preparations for an attack on the Chemin-des-Dames sector between Soissons and Reims, intended originally for April 17, but it was not ready until May 27 —largely owing to his own prolongation of the Flanders offensive with its consequent drain on his reserves. The intelligence section of the American G.H.Q. had predicted the site and approximate date of the attack, but their warnings were only heeded at a late hour, when confirmed by a prisoner's report on May 26. It was then too late to

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strengthen the defence, beyond putting the troops on the alert, but the warning enabled reserves to get on the move. Next morning the blow fell, by 15 divisions against 7, and although unaided by any cloak of mist, the attack swept over the Aisne and reached the Marne by May 30. But once again Ludendorff had obtained a measure of success for which he was neither prepared nor desirous. The surpriser was himself surprised. The opening success not only attracted thither too large a proportion of his own reserves, but forfeited their effect because they had no start over the allied reserves in the race.

The extent of the opening success, however, offers scope for analysis in view of the absence of mist and the fact that the attack had a smaller margin of superiority of force than its predecessors. It would seem due in part to the distraction of the allies' attention and reserves elsewhere, in part to following more strictly the line of least resistance, and in part to the folly of the local French army command. This insisted on the infantry being massed in the forward positions, there to be compressed cannon-fodder for the German guns. The artillery, local reserves and headquarters of the defence were similarly close to the front, and in consequence the greater degree of collapse followed the German break-through. Thereby the attack regained the tactical surprise effect which it had partly lost the day before it was launched. For as the object of all surprise is dislocation, the effect is similar whether the opponent be caught napping by deception or allows himself to be trapped with his eyes open.

Ludendorff had now created two huge bulges, and another smaller one, in the Allied front. His next attempt was to pinch out the Compiègne " traverse " which lay

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between the Amiens and Marne bulges. But this time there was no surprise, and the blow on the west side of the "traverse," June 9, was too late to coincide with the pressure on the east. A month's pause followed. Ludendorff was anxious to strike his long-cherished decisive blow against the British in Belgium, but he considered that their reserves here were still too strong, and so again decided on a diversion, hoping that a heavy blow in the south would draw off the British reserves. He had failed to pinch out the Compiègne "traverse" on the west of his Marne salient; he was now about to attempt the same method on the east, by attacking on either side of Reims. But he needed an interval for rest and preparation, and the delay was fatal, giving the British and French time to recuperate and the Americans to gather strength.

It would be true to say that the tactical success of his own blows had been Ludendorff's undoing in the sense that, yielding to their influence, he had pressed each too far and too long, so using up his own reserves and causing an undue interval between each blow. He had followed, not the line of least resistance, but the line of hardening resistance. Thus after the initial break-through each attack had become strategically a pure direct approach. He had driven in three great wedges, but none had penetrated far enough to sever a vital artery, and this strategic failure left the Germans with an indented front which invited flanking counter-strokes.

On July 15 Ludendorff launched his new attack, but its coming was no secret. East of Reims it was foiled by an elastic defence, and west of Reims the German penetration across the Marne merely enmeshed them more deeply to their downfall—for on July 18 Foch launched a

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long-prepared stroke against the other flank of the Marne salient. Here Pétain, who directed the operation, turned the key which Ludendorff lacked, using masses of light tanks to lead a surprise attack on the Cambrai method. The Germans managed to hold the gates of the salient open long enough to draw their forces back into safety and straighten their line. But their reserves were depleted, Ludendorff was forced first to postpone and then to abandon the offensive in Flanders, and the initiative definitely and finally passed to the Allies.

The nature of the allied counterstroke on the Marne requires examination. Pétain had asked Foch to assemble two groups of reserves at Beauvais and Epernay respectively with a view to a counterstroke against the flank of, and subsequent to, any fresh German attack. The first group, under Mangin, was used to break the German attack of June 9 and was then switched to a position on the west face of the Marne salient. Foch, however, planned to use it for the directly offensive purpose of a push against the rail centre of Soissons. While this was being prepared the intelligence service obtained certain news of the forthcoming German attack near Reims. Foch thereupon determined to anticipate it, not retort to it, by launching his stroke on July 12. Pétain, however, had the contrary idea of letting the Germans come on and entangle themselves and then of striking at their rear flank. And, perchance curiously, the French troops were not ready on July 12, so that the battle was fought more according to Pétain's than to Foch's conception. More, but not wholly. For Pétain's plan had been, first, to yield his forward position to the attackers, by holding it lightly, and bring them to a halt in face of the intact rear

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position; then to launch local counter-attacks so that the enemy might be drawn to engage their reserves in the new pockets their attacks on either side of Reims would make; finally, to unleash Mangin to the real counter-offensive eastward along the base-line of the main Marne salient. Thereby he might close the neck of the vast sack in which the German forces south of the Aisne would be enclosed.

Events and Foch combined to modify this conception. East of Reims the German attack was nullified by the elastic defence—a form of tactical indirect approach. But west of Reims the commanders persisted in the old rigid method of defence and in consequence had their line broken. The Germans penetrated beyond the Marne, and to avert the danger Pétain was driven to use most of the reserves he had intended for his second phase. To replace them he decided to draw from Mangin and to postpone the latter's counterstroke, already ordered by Foch for July 18. When Foch heard of this he promptly countermanded it. Hence the second phase had to be dropped out and the German reserves were available to hold Mangin back and hold open the neck of the sack. The counterstroke soon became a purely direct pressure converging, like Falkenhayn's of 1915 in Poland, on the whole sack and pressing the Germans back out of it.

Foch's governing idea henceforth was simply to keep the initiative and to give the enemy no rest while his own reserves were accumulating. His first step was to free his own lateral railways by a series of local offensives. The first was made by Haig on August 8 in front of Amiens. By skilful precautions and deceptions Rawlinson's 4th Army was doubled, and the attack—led by 450 tanks—

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was perhaps the most complete surprise of the war in its opening. If it soon came to a halt—the directness of its pressure was a natural reason—its initial shock of surprise sufficed to dislocate the moral balance of the German Supreme Command, and by convincing Ludendorff of the moral bankruptcy of his troops led him to declare that peace must be sought by negotiation. Meantime "the object of our strategy must be to paralyse the enemy's war-will gradually by a strategic defensive."

Meanwhile, however, the allies evolved a new strategical method. Foch gave the first impulse by ordering a succession of attacks at different points. Haig completed its evolution by refusing to agree to Foch's instructions for a continuance of the 4th Army's frontal pressure. Its advance was only resumed after the 3rd and 1st Armies in turn had struck. Hence the allied offensive, although only in the sphere of Haig's and Pétain's control, became a series of rapid blows at different points, each broken off as soon as its initial impetus waned, each so aimed as to pave the way for the next, and all close enough in time and space to react on each other. Thus a check was placed on Ludendorff's power of switching reserves to anticipate the blows, and a progressive tax placed upon his reserve balance at an economic cost to the allied treasury. This method, if not a true indirect approach, appears at least a borderline case. If it did not take the line of least expectation, it avoided the line of natural expectation. If it did not take the line of least resistance, it never continued along the line of hardening resistance. In fact, it was a negative form of the indirect approach.

In view of the moral and numerical decline of the German forces, this method sufficed, for a time at any

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rate, to ensure a continuous advance and gradual weakening of the German resistance. The clear evidence of this decline and Haig's consequent assurance that he could break the Hindenburg Line where the German reserves were strongest caused Foch to relinquish the method and undertake a general and simultaneous offensive at the end of September.

The plan was for a directly convergent pressure upon the vast salient formed by the German front in France. It was hoped that the two allied wings, formed by the British and Americans respectively, would, as they closed in, cut off a large part of the German armies in the salient. This hope was based on the idea that the Ardennes formed an almost impassable back wall with narrow exits on the flanks. One may add, incidentally, that this idea of the Ardennes must have arisen from a lack of knowledge of the district, for it is well-roaded, and most of it is rolling rather than mountainous country.

Originally, on Pershing's suggestion, the plan had contained a certain degree of indirectness of approach. His proposal was that the American Army should exploit its local success in erasing the St. Mihiel salient by an advance towards Briey and past Metz with the aim of getting astride the German communications in Lorraine and menacing their western line of retreat to the Rhine. But Haig objected to this move as divergent from instead of convergent to the other allied attacks, and Foch changed his plan accordingly, discarding Pershing's project. The American Army, in consequence, had to transfer its effort westwards and hastily mount an attack, with a bare week's preparation, in the Meuse-Argonne sector. Here the prolonged pressure along the line of hardening resistance

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resulted in high costs and confusion, besides proving unnecessary to ease Haig's advance through the Hindenburg Line. There the course of events tended to demonstrate that a direct approach, given overwhelming fire superiority and a morally decaying opponent, can break into the enemy's position but cannot break him up.

By November 11, the date of the Armistice, the German forces, at the sacrifice of their rearguards, were safely out of the salient and back on a shortened and straightened line. The allied advance had practically come to a standstill, less because of German resistance than because of the difficulty of its maintenance and supply across the destroyed areas. Under these conditions a direct approach had merely helped the Germans to slip away faster than they could be followed.

Fortunately, the last phase of the military offensive mattered little. The moral blow which the initial surprise of August 8 had given to the German Command was completed and made mortal by an indirect approach in a far-distant theatre. This was the allied offensive on the Salonika front. Aimed at a sector where the terrain was so difficult that the defenders were few, it broke rapidly through. Once this had happened, the difficult mountain country hindered the defenders switching their reserves laterally to block the progress of the advance down the line of least resistance. With their army split in two, the war-weary Bulgarians craved an armistice. This achievement not only knocked away the first prop of the Central Alliance but opened the way to an advance on Austria's rear. The menace became closer when an Italian offensive fell on and broke through Austria's morally shaken and physically exhausted front; for with Austria's prompt

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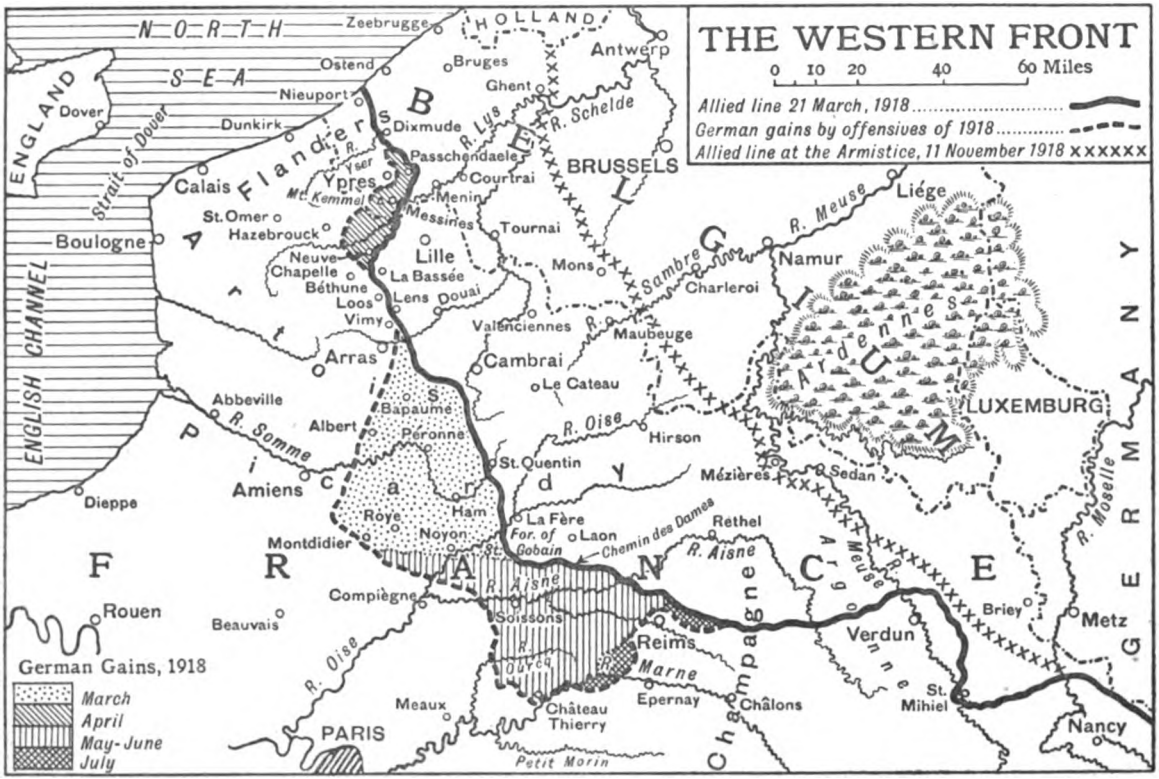

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capitulation her territory and railways were available to the allies as a base of operations against Germany's back-door. In September General von Gallwitz had told the German Chancellor that such a contingency, then unrealised, would be " decisive."

This menace and the heightened moral effect of the blockade—that other, grand strategic, indirect approach —on a people now hunger-stricken and hopeless, constituted a pair of spurs by which in the last days the German Government was urged towards surrender. They were spurs, applied to a bolting steed, but it was a crack of the whip which had made it bolt. The whip was the collapse of Bulgaria, reinforced by the first reports of the renewal of the frontal attack in France.

The Supreme Command lost its nerve—only for a matter of days, but that was sufficient, and recovery too late. On Sept. 29 they took the precipitate decision to appeal for an armistice, saying that the collapse of the Bulgarian front had upset all their dispositions—" troops destined for the Western front had had to be despatched there." This had " fundamentally changed " the situation in view of the attacks then being launched on the Western front, for though these " had so far been beaten off their continuance must be reckoned with."

This clause refers to Foch's general offensive. The American attack in the Meuse-Argonne had begun on Sept. 26, but had come practically to a standstill by the 28th. A Franco-Belgo-British attack had opened in Flanders on the 28th, but if unpleasant did not look really menacing. But on the morning of the 29th Haig's main blow was falling on the Hindenburg Line, and the early news was disquieting.

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In this emergency Prince Max was called to be Chancellor to negotiate a peace move with his international reputation for moderation and honour as its covering pledge. To bargain effectively and without confession of defeat he needed, and asked, a breathing space "of ten, eight, even four days, before I have to appeal to the enemy." But Hindenburg merely reiterated that "the gravity of the military situation admits of no delay," and insisted that "a peace offer to our enemies be issued at once."

Hence on Oct. 3 the appeal for an immediate armistice went out to President Wilson. It was an open confession of defeat to the world, and even before this—on Oct. 1—the Supreme Command had undermined their own home front by communicating the same impression to a meeting of the leaders of all political parties.

Men who had so long been kept in the dark were blinded by the sudden light. All the forces of discord and pacifism received an immense impulse.

Within a few days the Supreme Command became more cheerful, even optimistic, when it saw that breaking into the Hindenburg Line had not been followed by an actual break-through of the fighting front. More encouragement came from reports of a slackening in the force of the Allies' attacks, particularly in the exploitation of opportunities. Ludendorff still wanted an armistice, but only to give his troops a rest as a prelude to further resistance and to ensure a secure withdrawal to a shortened defensive line on the frontier. By Oct. 17 he even felt he could do it without a rest. It was less that the situation had changed as that his impression of it had been revised. It had never been quite so bad as he had pictured it on Sept. 29. But his first impression had now spread

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throughout the political circles and public of Germany—as the ripples spread when a pebble has been dropped in a pool. The "home-front" began to crumble later, but it crumbled quicker than the battle front.

On Oct. 23 President Wilson replied to the German requests by a note which virtually required an unconditional surrender. Ludendorff wished to carry on the struggle in hopes that a successful defence of the German frontier might damp the determination of the Allies. But the situation had passed beyond his control, the nation's will-power was broken, and his advice was in discredit. On Oct. 26 he was forced to resign.

Then for 36 hours the Chancellor lay in coma from an overdose of sleeping draught. When he returned to his office on the evening of Nov. 3, not only Turkey, but Austria, had capitulated. The back-gate was open. Next day revolution broke out in Germany, and swept rapidly over the country, fanned as peace negotiations were delayed, by the Kaiser's reluctance to abdicate. Compromise with the revolutionaries was the only chance, and on Nov. 9 Prince Max handed over to the Socialist Ebert. The German Armistice plenipotentiaries were already with Foch. At five a.m. on Nov. 11 they signed the terms; at 11 a.m. the war was over.

The issue of the war had been finally decided on Sept. 29, decided in the mind of the German Command. Ludendorff and his associates had then "cracked," and the sound went echoing backwards until it had resounded throughout the whole of Germany. Nothing could catch it or stop it. The Command might recover its nerve, the actual military position might improve, but the moral impression, as ever in war, was decisive.

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Among the fundamental causes of Germany's surrender the blockade is seen to assume larger and larger proportions as the fog of war disperses in the clearer light of these post-war years.

Its existence is the surest answer to the question whether but for the revolution the German armies could have stood firm on their own frontiers. For even if the German people, roused to a supreme effort in visible defence of their own soil, could have held the allied armies at bay the end could only have been postponed—because of the grip of sea-power, Britain's historic weapon.

But in hastening the surrender, in preventing a continuance of the war into 1919 military action ranks foremost. That conclusion does not necessarily, or even naturally, imply that at the moment of the Armistice Germany's military power was broken or her armies decisively beaten, nor that the Armistice was a mistaken concession. Rather does the record of the last "hundred days," when sifted, confirm the immemorial lesson that the true aim in war is the mind of the hostile rulers, not the bodies of their troops; that the balance between victory and defeat turns on mental impressions and only indirectly on physical blows. It was the shock of being surprised and the feeling that he was powerless to counter potential strategic moves which shook Ludendorff's nerve more than the loss of prisoners, guns, and acreage.

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